Over the past thirty years, neoliberalism has become one of the most significant concepts in political theory and philosophy. This course aims to provide an introduction to the socio-cultural formations that define and construct the notion of neoliberalism, investigating the genealogy of values that enforce utility, calculation and competition both on a subjective and on a macroeconomic scale. Dardot and Laval argue that "competitive capitalism is not a product of nature, it is a machine which requires constant surveillance and regulation". In fact, the naturalization of competition as the “normal” conduct in the global market is inseparable from the constant enforcement of disciplinary techniques meant to refine an apparatus of efficiency and quantitative evaluation. The neoliberal subject hence lives in a society that bursts with contradictions: a general logic of human relations subject to the rule of maximizing profit, and a global agenda based on debt, the privatization of the public sector, the weakening of human rights and the deregulation of financial market. How are we to make sense of a system that encourages competition while undermining the very reproduction of life? Where is the point of rupture between the discursive consistency of neoliberalism and its demands?

Learning Goals

In terms of learning goals, this course will:

a. enable you to grasp advanced questions regarding the field of global studies, studies of governance and social policies.

b. It will help you organize and present your research in these fields.

c. It will help you chose the most reliable sources and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of social policies in the field of social governance and governmental studies.

d. It will help you communicate your work and your research in English on top of partaking in a global debate in these topics.

e. It will finally help you consolidate your competence in the field of social studies in an autonomous and self-organized manner.

Class Policies

Active participation is a key aspect for succeeding in this class. The exam consists in active participation in each class discussion and a final paper. Final papers should be 15 page long and should be turned in one week before the exam. For your final paper, you should focus on four books of your choice selected from the bibliography indicated below:

Please chose three (3) books of your choice from the following reading list:

- David Harvey, A brief history of neoliberalism, Oxford University Press
- Becker, Gary S. “Human Capital: a Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special
Reference to Schooling.” (1964).
• G Dumenil and D Levy, The Crisis of Neoliberalism (Harvard 2011)
• Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, The New Spirit of Capitalism (Verso, 2006)

Please chose one (1) book of your choice from the following reading list:

• Jodi Dean, Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics, 2009.
• Jeremy Gilbert (ed.) Special double issue (80/81) of New Formations, Neoliberal Culture: https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/new-formations/80-81/what-kind-thing-neoliberalism

Students who are not able to attend class are required to write a 25-page final paper that addresses five books (5) out of the following list. Each final paper will be turned in one week before the exam date and discussed during an oral exam.

Bibliography for working students.

Required books
Please choose 3 (three) books of your choice from the following reading list:

• David Harvey, A brief history of neoliberalism, Oxford University Press
• G Dumenil and D Levy, The Crisis of Neoliberalism (Harvard 2011)
• Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, The New Spirit of Capitalism (Verso, 2006)

Please choose two (2) books of your choice from the following list:

• Jodi Dean, Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics, 2009.
• Jeremy Gilbert (ed.) Special double issue (80/81) of New Formations, Neoliberal Culture: https://www.lwbooks.co.uk/new-formations/80-81/what-kind-thing-neoliberalism

In the written paper you should be able to answer five basic questions about the nature and the definition of neoliberalism.

1. What is neoliberalism?
2. How does neoliberalism define the market and the state?
3. How did the welfare state change in the neoliberal turn? - please address education, health care, labor policies and union relations.
4. What do we mean by the neo-liberal subject?
5. Is neo-liberalism in crisis? Please support your answer with theoretical evidence and references to media that address the current situation.

Tentative Schedule

2.8 Introduction and presentations.
2.22 On Freedom. Readings: David Harvey, ch. 1-2.
3.1 The neo-liberal state, Readings: David Harvey, ch. 3-4.
3.8 The neo-liberal state, Readings: David Harvey, ch. 3-4.
3.15 On Education, Readings: Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom Chapter 6
3.22 Documentary
Social Welfare Measures, Readings: Philippe's Van Parijs "Arguing for Basic Income" Chapter 1
4.5 Social Welfare Measures, Readings: Friedman Capitalism and Freedom Chapters 11-12
4.12 On precarity and labor, J. M. Keynes, Economic Possibilities for our grandchildren
4.19 On precarity and labor, Foucault, Birth of Biopolitics.

4.25 class discussion


NOTE:

*Most materials are provided in class
**Syllabus is subject to changes to better accommodate students and schedule

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Dispense e materiali di approfondimento e di autovalutazione disponibili online; testi di riferimento in formato e-book
Piattaforme e-learning, moodle
Utilizzo strumenti open-source