Drawing on Political Economy, American Studies, and Sociology, this interdisciplinary course critically examines how power is structured in American capitalism. Although there is a growing recognition that in the face of sky-rocketing CEO salaries the rich seem to be getting richer leaving everyone else behind, there is little awareness of just how power is structured and exercised in American capitalism and how such power affects economic outcomes. This course begins with an examination of the patterns of income and wealth inequality in the U.S., and proceeds to explain these patterns of inequality by analyzing the way power is constituted in the social relations of capitalist production and distribution. Special attention will then be given to the ways powerful economic elites and organizations are able to control economic decision-making as well as influence government policy-making and culture-making institutions such as the mass media. Finally, oppositional forms of power will be examined focusing on worker and citizen power and resistance. Alternatives to present forms of capitalism will also be explored.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


**BBDoc** Readings on Blackboard

**BBLink** Web articles on Blackboard

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Class participation will count 10% of the final grade. Participation includes your attentiveness and the seriousness with which you engage the course materials. Being able to participate well requires an intellectual engagement with the course materials/ideas prior to class meetings.

2. There are a series of writing assignments that you will be required to write. These include reading summaries or outlines of readings (10% of final grade) and readings briefs (25% of final grade). See Blackboard “Assignments” for description.

3. There will be a mid-term exam. (30% of final grade)

4. There will a group final paper. See Blackboard “Assignments” for details. (25% of final grade)
TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

I. Sharing the Pie: Distribution of Wealth and Income in the U.S.
   Field Guide to the U.S. Economy: Preface, Chs 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6.

II. Them That Has Gits: Power in the Capitalist Economy
   A. Historical Evolution of Capitalism
      - Bowles, Edwards, & Roosevelt (BER), Ch 1
   B. Political Economy Methodology
      - BER Ch 3
   C. Social Surplus, Classes, and Economic Systems
      - BER Ch 5, Ch 6, & Ch 7 (p 147-157).
   D. Production & Profits, Wages & Work
      - BER Ch 10, Ch 11 (Skip Sections on “Price Competition” & “Breakthroughs” [258-264], and Ch 12.
   E. Technology, Control, and Class Conflict
      - BER Ch 13
      - BER Ch 14 (p 361-374)
      - Field Guide Chs 3 and 4.

EXAM

III. Capitalisms Macrodynamic Forces
   A. Accumulation and Change
      - BBDoc Barone, “Dynamics of Capitalism.”
      - BER Ch 7 (p 158-181).
   B. Current State of U.S. Capitalism
      - BBLink: Josh Bivens, “Globalization and American Wages” EPI Briefing Paper
      - BBLink: Jared Bernstein, “Updated CBO Data Show Unprecedented Increase in Income Inequality,” EPI Issue Brief
        http://www.epi.org/printer.cfm?id=2842&content_type=1&nice_name=ib239
      - TBA Additional Readings
      - In Class Video: “Roger and Me”
   C. Wal-Martization of America
      - BBDoc: Harold Meyerson “Labor Lost: In Wal-mart’s America” American Prospect

IV. Capitalist Domination Beyond the Economy
   A. How a Power Elite Rules America
      - BER Ch 19
      - Domhoff Who Rules America
      - Part IV.A. Reading Brief Due
   B. Capitalist Control of Ideology: U.S. Media
      - Martin Framed! Labor and the Corporate Media Chs 1, 3, (Ch 4 or 5 or 6), and 7.
      - Domhoff Who Rules America Ch 5
      - In Class Video: “Fear and Favor in the Newsroom”
      - BBDoc: Jeffrey Scheuer, “Media, Democracy, and the Left” Dissent Fall 2007
Part IV.B. Reading Brief Due
V. **Sources of Worker Power and Resistance**
   - Michael Yates, *Why Unions Matter*
   - In Class Video: “Out of Darkness” United Mine Workers of America.

**Part V. Reading Brief Due**

VI. **Towards a More Just and Humane Economy and Society**

A. **Readings:**
   - Domhoff *Who Rules America* Ch 8.
   - Alperovitz *America Beyond Capitalism*, Part I, Part II, Part IV, and Part V.

B. **Labor/Economic/Social Justice Web-Sites:**

**Labor Unions**
- WEB: [AFL-CIO](#)
- WEB: [Service Employees International Union](#)
- WEB: [LaborNET](#)
- WEB: [National Labor Committee](#)
- WEB: [UNITE HERE!](#)
- WEB: [Industrial Workers of the World](#)
- WEB: [Teamsters for a Democratic Union](#)

**Economic Justice**
- WEB: [United For a Fair Economy](#)
- WEB: [Jobs With Justice](#)
- WEB: [Democratic Socialists of America](#)
- WEB: [ACORN](#)
- WEB: [National Interfaith Committee For Worker Justice](#)
- WEB: [Living Wage Resource Center](#)

**Alternatives to Capitalist Organization of Production/Distribution**
- WEB: [International Cooperative Alliance](#)
- WEB: [United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives](#)
- WEB: [The Capital Ownership Group](#)
- WEB: [Participatory Economics (Parecon)](#)
- WEB: [Cooperative Development Services](#)
- WEB: [Cooperation Works](#)

**Corporate Accountability**
- WEB: [Corporate Accountability International](#)
- WEB: [Corporate Watch: Holding Corporations Accountable](#)
- WEB: [Multinational Monitor](#)
- WEB: [Wake Up Wal-Mart](#)

**Students Activism**
- WEB: [Sweatshop Watch: http://www.igc.apc.org/swatch](#)
- WEB: [United Students Against Sweatshops](#)
- WEB: [Student For A Democratic Society](#)
- WEB: [Campus Activism](#)

**Political Action**
- WEB: [Project Vote](#)
- WEB: [Center for Voting and Democracy](#)
- WEB: [Independent Progressive Politics Network](#)
- WEB: [Midwest Democracy Center](#)
- WEB: [The Labor Party](#)
- WEB: [The New Party](#)
- WEB: [The Working Families Party](#)
Challenging the Media Monopoly
- WEB: FAIR: Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting
- WEB: Center for Media and Democracy
- WEB: Media Education Foundation
- WEB: Project Censored
- WEB: Center for Digital Democracy

Progressive Social Change
- WEB: IGC Internet: A Progressive Web-site Connecting People Changing the World
- WEB: Community Wealth.org
- WEB: Positive Futures Network
- WEB: The Real Utopias Project
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Course Intro</td>
<td>All</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Part I</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>January 28</td>
<td>Part II.A&amp;B</td>
<td>BER Chs 1 &amp; 3 Outline due</td>
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<td>January 31</td>
<td>Part II.C</td>
<td>BER Ch 5 Outline due</td>
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<td>Part II.C</td>
<td>BER Ch 6 Outline due</td>
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<td>February 7</td>
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<td>BER Ch 7(147-157 only) Outline due</td>
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<td>February 11</td>
<td>Part II.D</td>
<td>BER Ch 10 Outline due</td>
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<td>February 14</td>
<td>Part II.D</td>
<td>BER Ch 11 (skip 258-264 &amp; 268-273) Outline due</td>
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<td>Part II.D</td>
<td>BER Ch 12 Outline due</td>
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<td>February 21</td>
<td>Part II.E</td>
<td>BER Ch 13; Ch 14 (361-370 only) Outline due</td>
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<td>Barone “Dynamics,” BER Ch 7 (158-181 only)</td>
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<td>March 3</td>
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<td>Current State Readings</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
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<td>Wal-Mart Readings</td>
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<td>Martin Chs 1 &amp; 3</td>
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<td>Martin Ch 4 or 5 or 6; Domhoff Ch 5</td>
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<td>Part IV.B</td>
<td>Martin Ch 7 + web article (Part IV.B Reading Brief Due)</td>
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<td>Part V</td>
<td>Yates Chs 1 &amp; 2</td>
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<td>Alperovitz Intro/Part I (Skip Ch 5)</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Part VI.B</td>
<td>Alperovitz Part V/Domhoff Ch 8.</td>
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<td>Tues May 6th</td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Due in Landis anytime before 3pm.</td>
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