Overview: This seminar introduces students to the field of “Law and Political Economy” (LPE) and explores current topics in LPE scholarship. LPE scholars are a diverse group whose work cuts across subject areas and methodologies. Nevertheless, LPE scholars tend to hold that “the economy” and “politics” are deeply interdependent—and yet that much legal doctrine, legal scholarship, and legal discourse denies that interdependence. Many LPE scholars also seek to understanding the relationship among axes of social inequality including race, class, gender, and nationality, and to envision more democratic and inclusive legal and political-economic orders.

The first part of the course will provide general introduction to LPE. We will begin by reading several law review articles articulating what LPE is and that lay out major themes within LPE research. We will then situate LPE within past bodies of legal theory including legal realism, critical legal studies, and critical race theory. In Spring 2022, the second part of the course will address at least two current topics in LPE research. First, we will study classical and contemporary theories of the relationship between law and capitalism as a social and economic order. Our goal there will be to shed additional light on how law constitutes the political-economy, and how political-economic forces in turn shape law. Second, we will explore the law and political economy of labor, broadly defined to include forms of work that are free and unfree, paid and unpaid, and national and global.

Assigned readings

Note, Jan. 10: Links to the assigned readings for each week, and some notes from me, can be found on the course site under “assignments.”

Unit 1: Foundations

Class 1, January 18: Introduction—What is LPE?


**Class 2, January 25: Critical Legal Studies as a Precursor to LPE**


See the course website for additional details on how to prepare this case.

**Class 3, February 1: Critical Race Theory as a Precursor to LPE**


**Unit 2: Capitalism and the Law**

**Class 4, February 8: Defining “Capitalism”**


Nancy Fraser, Beyond Marx’s Hidden Abode: For An Expanded Conception of Capitalism, *New Left Review*, (March-April 2014)

*Creative Destruction*, Wikipedia (Jan. 10, 2021), PDF, pp 1 (intro), 4-5 (Schumpeter)


**Class 5, Feb. 15: Weber and Polanyi on Law and Capitalist Development**


[GULC has no classes on Feb. 22]

### Class 6, March 1: “Informational” Capitalism


### Class 7, March 8: Global Capitalism and Law


Carlos Vela-Martinez: *World Systems Theory* (available online)

[GULC Spring break, week of March 14]

### Unit 3: LPE and Work

#### Class 8, March 22: Antimonopoly and Work


### Class 9, March 29: Data, Technology, and Work

I’ve uploaded the full manuscript. Please read the intro, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2. Then read either Chapter 3, Chapter 4, or Chapter 5. Focus on the intro and first two chapters, and read the additional chapter carefully enough that you can grasp its main argument.

I’d also like to run class a little differently this time. Let’s treat it like an academic talk: I’ll outline the book’s argument for about 30 minutes, likely with a PowerPoint, and then open it up for questions. So please come prepared with a few questions about my overall argument, how it fits into the other materials we’ve read this semester, etc. And in preparing those questions or comments, please feel free to push back on my arguments!

**Class 10, April 5: The Law and Political Economy of Care**


Nah Zatz, *Care Work In & Beyond the Labor Market*, LPE BLOG, December 6, 2019,

**Class 11, April 12: Ecology, Political Economy, and Law**

Nancy Fraser, *Climates of Capital*, NEW LEFT REVIEW, (Jan-Feb 2021)


Angela Harris, *Tracking Extraction*, LPE BLOG, February 24, 2020, at [https://lpeproject.org/blog/tracking-extraction/](https://lpeproject.org/blog/tracking-extraction/)

**Unit 4: Conclusion**

**Class 12, April 19 – Paper Presentations**

**Class 13, April 26 – Finance and political economy.**
