



INSTEP-WFU Cambridge

## Contemporary Capitalism

This course explores contemporary capitalism from the perspective of critical political economy. The course focuses on capitalism as we have experienced it in recent decades, but places this in historical context, addressing it through the lens of both classical and contemporary theories. It explores key relations such as those between workers and capitalists, those between public and private actors, and those between industry and finance. The course adopts a broad view of capitalism as a social system, appreciating the significance of the state, unpaid labour, and geopolitical rivalry.

### **Suggested General Readings:**

Ha-Joon Chang. 2014. *Economics: the User's Guide* (Pelican)

James Fulcher. 2015. *Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press)

Geoffrey Ingham. 2008. *Capitalism* (Polity Press)

Karl Marx. 1975 [originally published 1891, based on speeches delivered in 1847]. *Wage-Labour and Capital* (International Publishers) [or any other reputable edition]

### **Assessment:**

Students will be graded on a combination of:

- An in-class exam (comprised of short-answer questions, rather than an essay)
- Class participation (e.g. a presentation on an assigned topic)
- Attendance

### **Topics by week:**

- 1 Capital and capitalism
- 2 Markets and states
- 3 Firms and investors
- 4 Class and mobility
- 5 Work and workers
- 6 Households and reproduction
- 7 Commodity and consumer
- 8 Industry and finance
- 9 Globalisation and imperialism
- 10 Neoliberalism and regulation
- 11 EXAM