

POLSC 250 / International Relations

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE CLASS SYSTEM THEORY / GLOBALISM

Terms and concepts to know:

North-South conflict
Multinational corporations
Marxism
Dialectical materialism
Bourgeoisie
Imperialism
Uneven development
Neo-imperialism

Transnational class coalitions
Core/Periphery states
Das Kapital
Proletariat
Class Struggle
Noblesse oblige
Dependency Theory
Capitalist world system

Study and discussion questions:

1. Discuss some of the key differences between the realist, transnationalist, and class system theory schools in IR. Of these three system level theories, which do you think is the best for describing, explaining, and ultimately predicting international events? Give examples of why you believe that theory is best.
2. Which of the critiques of class system theory (a.k.a. globalism) do you find the most and least compelling?
3. Discuss the various stages of development in Marx's and Engels' description of class struggle.
4. How does Lenin explain the evolution of imperialism from capitalism?
5. Discuss Wallerstein's contention (p. 272:1.5) that "the capitalist world-economy cannot survive" and as a historical social system is "in the process of being superseded." Do you agree? Why or why not?
6. What are the three levels of international competition identified by Halliday?
7. What key assumptions of class system theory can you identify in the speech by Noam Chomsky? Does his evaluation of U.S. foreign policy complement or differ from Lenin's critique of imperialism (p. 210)?
8. What concepts did you see in the Klare film that relate to class system theory? How would other theorists respond to their critique?

Readings:

Genest. *Conflict and Cooperation*, Chapter 4, pp.191-256.

Video:

Blood and Oil, a documentary based on Michael Klare's bestselling book of the same name.