

Liverpool John Moores University

Title: Tales of the Market: Capitalism and Critique
Status: Definitive
Code: **6114ENGL** (122172)
Version Start Date: 01-08-2021

Owning School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Science
Teaching School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Science

Team	Leader
Ross Dawson	Y

Academic Level: FHEQ6
Credit Value: 20
Total Delivered Hours: 35
Total Learning Hours: 200
Private Study: 165

Delivery Options

Course typically offered: Semester 1

Component	Contact Hours
Lecture	11
Seminar	22
Tutorial	2

Grading Basis: 40 %

Assessment Details

Category	Short Description	Description	Weighting (%)	Exam Duration
Reflection	AS1	blogs	40	
Essay	AS2	critical essay	60	

Aims

1. To introduce students to narratives of capitalism in fiction and non-fiction.
2. To develop an interdisciplinary knowledge of the key concepts of capitalist critique and examine their relevance in making sense of significant cultural texts.
3. To critically read how the desires, contradictions and failures of the market are expressed through significant cultural texts.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the module the student should be able to:

- 1 Make sense of different types of narratives of capitalism using an appropriate critical vocabulary.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate a range of key concepts and ideas relating to modern capitalism.
- 3 Generate developed readings of the cultural, aesthetic, and political components of specific tales of the market.

Learning Outcomes of Assessments

The assessment item list is assessed via the learning outcomes listed:

Blogs	1	2	
Critical essay	1	2	3

Outline Syllabus

Week 1 Capitalism and Culture: Making Sense of the Market

Reading: Capitalist Realism: There is No Alternative by Mark Fisher (2009)

Week 2: Representing Neoliberal Capitalism and Crisis

Viewing: Margin Call by J C Chandor (2011)

Week 3: Corporate Capitalism and Success Narrative

Reading: The Man in a Gray Flannel Suit by Sloan Wilson (1955)

Week 4 Capitalism from Below: Representing Alienated Labour

Reading: Factotum by Charles Bukowski (1975)

Week 5 Sell, Sell, Sell: Individualism, Merit and the "Bottom Line":

Reading/Viewing: Glengarry Glen Ross by David Mamet (1982)

Week 6: Reading the Market Aesthetically: some approaches to literary capitalism

Week 7: History of the System: the Subject of Capitalism:

Reading: Gain: A Novel by Richard Powers (1998)

Week 8: Capitalism and Determination

Reading: Gain: A Novel by Richard Powers (1998)

Week 9: There is an Alternative: Capitalism and Utopia

Reading: The Dispossessed by Ursula Le Guin (1974)

Week 10: Hypercapitalism: Finance and Fiction

Reading: Cosmopolis by Don DeLillo (2003)

Week 11: Market Underworlds: Crime and Capitalism

Reading: Soul Circus by George Pelecanos (2003)

Learning Activities

Lectures, Seminars, Blog Discussion

Notes

Tales of the Market focuses on the ways in which cultural texts represent, narrate, aestheticize and critique capitalism. The fears and desires of the market will be explored through a range of modern literature, film and theoretical writing. These texts will form the spine of the module. Beginning with the first philosophers of American neoliberal capitalism, Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand, the module will use a range of Marxist-informed critical thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek, David Harvey, Jodi Dean, Benjamin Kunkel, Mark Fisher and Frederic Jameson to examine cultural expressions of capitalism. The module will be nominally organized around narratives of 20th/21st Century American literature and film, including representations of corporate conformity, the culture of sales, the dematerialization of the economy, neoliberalism, alienated labour, and conversely, the pleasures of the market.