

# PO240-15 Capitalism and Its Alternatives

23/24

**Department**

Politics & International Studies

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Chris Rogers

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

---

## Description

### Introductory description

Mainstream political discourses often allude to the fact that, in the context of globalization, there is little choice but to pursue particular kinds of policies. Critical discourses in political economy, on the other hand, have often spoken of the need to replace capitalism with an alternative. This module scrutinizes the way in which discourses of this kind might combine in order to produce and reinforce liberal-market forms of capitalism. It aims to illustrate the complexity involved in identifying 'capitalist' and 'alternative' forms of social, political, and economic relations, consider the processes through which the transformation of these social relations might occur, and introduces and critically discuss examples of both real and imagined alternatives to capitalism.

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

- To scrutinise claims that there is no alternative to liberal market capitalism
- To scrutinise critiques of liberal market capitalism and its alternatives
- To develop an understanding of various theories of social, political, and economic transformation

- To examine various alternative capitalist and non-capitalist forms of social and economic organisation in practice
- To develop student's research and writing skills

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

1. Introduction
2. Critique and Capitalist Hegemony
3. Theories of Transformation
4. Utopian Socialism
5. Technological Change and (Post) Capitalism
6. READING WEEK
7. Workers' Cooperatives and Mondragon
8. Zapatista
9. The Right to the City
10. Humanising Capitalism

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Be able to critically engage with the notion that there is no alternative to liberal market capitalism
- Understand the relative merits of critiques of liberal market capitalism and its alternatives
- Critically assess the relative merits of various theories of social, political, and economic transformation
- Have a rounded empirical knowledge of various alternative capitalist and non-capitalist forms of social and economic organisation
- Have developed their research and essay writing skills

## Indicative reading list

E. O. Wright (2010) *Envisioning Real Utopias* Verso  
 J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996) *The End of Capitalism as We Knew it* University of Minnesota Press  
 J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006) *A Post Capitalist Politics*, University of Minnesota Press  
 G. Claeys (1991) *A New View of Society and Other Writings* Penguin  
 N. Srnicek and A Williams (2015) *Inventing the Future* Verso Books  
 G. Standing (2011) *The Precariat* I. B. Tauris  
 D. Harvey (2013) *Rebel Cities* Verso Books  
 C. Rogers (2014) *Capitalism and Its Alternatives* Zed Books  
 J. Holloway (2005) *Change the World Without Taking Power* Pluto Press

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## Subject specific skills

To scrutinise claims that there is no alternative to liberal market capitalism

- To scrutinise critiques of liberal market capitalism and its alternatives
- To develop an understanding of various theories of social, political, and economic transformation
- To examine various alternative capitalist and non-capitalist forms of social and economic organisation in practice
- To develop student's research and writing skills

## Transferable skills

The module provides students with opportunities to acquire or develop the following key skills:

Develop your reading comprehension through an engagement with the core texts

Develop your analytical writing skills through the preparation of summative assessments

Develop your group working skills through seminar discussions

---

## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

### Private study description

seminar reading and formative essays

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

---

## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

## Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
<b>Assessment component</b>			
Book Review	20%	15 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will be required to write a 750 word review of a book from a list provided by the module director. Students should provide a summary of the core arguments of the text, and offer a critical reflection on the strength of its arguments with reference to other interventions in the core debates studied on the module. The assessment should be submitted in week 7, and so this engagement should principally be with material covered in the module in the weeks before reading week.			
Reassessment component is the same			
<b>Assessment component</b>			
Essay Portfolio	80%	20 hours	Yes (extension)
Students will be required to answer two questions to form an essay portfolio. Questions will reflect the breadth of the module. Submission will be on the 2nd Wednesday of the subsequent term. Each answer should not exceed 1250 words and should be fully referenced.			
Reassessment component is the same			

## Feedback on assessment

PAIS feedback form

---

## Availability

### Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
- Year 2 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics

- Year 2 of UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
- Year 2 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 2 of UPOA-M162 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Unusual option for:

- UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics
  - Year 2 of V7MR Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite with Economics Major)
  - Year 2 of V7MP Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Bipartite)
  - Year 2 of V7ML Philosophy, Politics and Economics (Tripartite)
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7MW Undergraduate Politics, Philosophy and Law

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 2 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French
  - Year 2 of M163 Politics, International Studies and French
  - Year 3 of M163 Politics, International Studies and French
- UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
  - Year 2 of M164 Politics, International Studies and German
  - Year 3 of M164 Politics, International Studies and German
- UPOA-M166 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
  - Year 2 of M166 Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
  - Year 3 of M166 Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies
- UPOA-M165 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Italian
  - Year 2 of M165 Politics, International Studies and Italian
  - Year 3 of M165 Politics, International Studies and Italian

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UPHA-V7ML Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics