Marx from Beginning to End: The 1844 Manuscripts Today

Description:

This course gives a broad view of Marxism, but from a specific starting point, that of his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844. Written at the start of Marx’s political career, these notebooks were unpublished until the 1930s, and subsequently had a tumultuous history: embraced by the Frankfort School, rejected by Althusser, implied in Deleuze and Guattari, enjoying a minor revival in recent decades. As Donna Haraway remarks, the *Manuscripts* show Marx “both at his most humanist and at the edge of something else”. They include discussion of concepts such as the wage, alienation, money, species-being, inhuman power and free association that are both radically enlarged and revised in his later work, or vanish from it almost entirely. We will take these categories as keys to Marx and Marxism, examining both how they are transmuted in Marx’s major works, such as *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, and revived by critical theorists staging a twenty first century encounter between Marxism and ecology, feminism, precarity, biopower, computers, animals and the so-called Anthropocene. The course title, *Marx from Beginning to End*, can thus be taken in at least three senses: ‘all Marx, all the time’; from the young Marx to the Marx who dies writing *Capital*; and from the start of Marxism as a nineteenth century revolutionary project to a moment when its canonical forms end, starting something new.

Requirements:

1 in class presentation plus written summary (5-10pp): 25%

1 major research paper (20-30pp): 60%

Seminar participation: 15%

Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction

Week 2 A History of the Manuscripts

Week 3 Proletariat

Week 4 Absent Slaves
Readings will be drawn from some of the following sources:


