**Global Capitalism and the Anthropocene**

MPhil Paper Guide 2020-2021

Dr Jeremy Green

Teaching pattern: Wednesday 3-5pm starting on 14th October 2020

Assessment deadline: 4th December 2020

## Course Description

Scientists have proposed that the Earth is entering a new epoch in its geological history – the Anthropocene. In this new epoch, humans are shaping environmental change on a planetary scale. The ecological devastation and climatic transformation that mark the arrival of the Anthropocene, from the mass extinction of species to rapid global warming, have coincided with capitalism’s historical rise to global dominance. Critically rethinking the relationship between capitalism and planetary vitality is a core part of the project to reimagine the social sciences in the Anthropocene. Leveraging insights from across diverse academic disciplines, this paper examines the ecological and institutional foundations of global capitalism. The paper asks how capitalism has been made through and from nature and how nature has been transformed by capitalism. And it explores the uneven ecological, geographical, and socio-economic dynamics of global capitalist development.

We begin by examining theoretical interpretations of capitalism as a historically distinctive socio- economic order and ask how our understanding of capitalism might need to be reconfigured in an age of radical environmental instability. These theoretical foundations are then applied to the development of global capitalism, focussing on specific historical and contemporary examples. The examples studied range from the 19th century guano trade, to modern global meat production, and the linkages between stock markets and tectonic movements. In the final part of the paper we examine practical strategies, approaches, and intellectual frameworks for thinking about reconfiguring capitalism in the 21st century. We explore debates around the future of economic growth and assess emerging proposals for a Green New Deal.

The course will consist of seven seminars of 1.5 to 2hrs in length. The readings below are divided into core and further reading. It is expected that students will have read all of the core readings thoroughly in advance of each seminar. The further reading is useful for students that are conducting presentations or writing essays on specific topics. Students will present in class and will receive written feedback on their presentations. Presentations will not be formally assessed. Formal assessment will be in the form of an essay submitted at the end of term.

# General background reading

* Bonneuil, C., & Fressoz, J. B. (2016). *The shock of the Anthropocene: The earth, history and us*. Verso Books.
* Ceballos, G., Ehrlich, P. R., Barnosky, A. D., García, A., Pringle, R. M., & Palmer, T. M. (2015). Accelerated modern human–induced species losses: Entering the sixth mass extinction. *Science advances*, *1*(5), e1400253.
* McNeill, J. R., & Engelke, P. (2016). *The great acceleration: An environmental history of the Anthropocene since 1945*. Harvard University Press.
* Romm, J. (2018). *Climate Change: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press.
* Steffen et al. (2018) Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene, *PNAS Perspective* 115(33): 8252-8259.

# Week (1) What is capitalism?

## Core reading

* Block, F. L. (2018). *Capitalism: the future of an illusion*. Univ of California Press. Ch2. Pp28- 59.
* Pistor, K. (2019). *The code of capital: How the law creates wealth and inequality*. Princeton University Press. Ch1. pp1-21.
* Streeck, W. (2011). Taking capitalism seriously: towards an institutionalist approach to contemporary political economy. *Socio-Economic Review*, 9(1): 137-167.

## Further Reading

* Hay, C. (2020). Does capitalism (still) come in varieties?. *Review of International Political Economy*, *27*(2): 302-319.
* Hodgson, G. M. (2015). *Conceptualizing capitalism: Institutions, evolution, future*. University of Chicago Press.
* Ingham, G. (2013). *Capitalism: With a New Postscript on the Financial Crisis and Its Aftermath*. John Wiley & Sons.
* Nitzan, J., & Bichler, S. (2009). *Capital as power: A study of order and creorder*. Routledge.
* Wood, E. M. (2002). *The origin of capitalism: A longer view*. Verso.
* Zuboff, S. (2019). *The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*. Profile Books.
* Mumford, L. (2010). *Technics and civilization*. University of Chicago Press.

# Week (2) Capitalism and the Anthropocene

## Core reading

* Bonneuil, C., & Fressoz, J. B. (2016). *The shock of the Anthropocene: The earth, history and us*. Verso Books. Chs 1 & 2.
* Malm, A., & Hornborg, A. (2014). The geology of mankind? A critique of the Anthropocene narrative. *The Anthropocene Review*, *1*(1), 62-69.
* Moore, J. W. (2017). The Capitalocene, Part I: on the nature and origins of our ecological crisis. *The Journal of peasant studies*, *44*(3), 594-630.
* Steffen, W., Broadgate, W., Deutsch, L., Gaffney, O., & Ludwig, C. (2015). The Trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration. The Anthropocene Review, 2(1), 81-98.

## Further reading

* Crutzen, P. J. (2006). The “anthropocene”. In *Earth system science in the anthropocene* (pp. 13-18). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.
* Dryzek, J. S. (2016). Institutions for the anthropocene: governance in a changing earth system. *British Journal of Political Science*, *46*(4): 937-956.
* Lewis, S. L., & Maslin, M. A. (2015). Defining the anthropocene. *Nature*, *519*(7542): 171- 180.
* McNeill, J. R., & Engelke, P. (2016). *The great acceleration: An environmental history of the Anthropocene since 1945*. Harvard University Press.
* Moore, J. W. (2018). The Capitalocene Part II: accumulation by appropriation and the centrality of unpaid work/energy. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *45*(2): 237-279.
* Subramanian, M. (2019). Anthropocene now: influential panel votes to recognize Earth’s new epoch. *Nature*, 21, 2019.

# Week (3) Making the Anthropocene economy

## Core reading

* Clark, B., & Foster, J. B. (2009). Ecological imperialism and the global metabolic rift: Unequal exchange and the guano/nitrates trade. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, *50*(3-4): 311-334.
* Jonsson, F. A. (2014). The origins of Cornucopianism: A preliminary genealogy. *Critical Historical Studies*, 1(1): 151-168.
* Patel, R., & Moore, J. W. (2017). *A history of the world in seven cheap things: A guide to capitalism, nature, and the future of the planet*. Univ of California Press. Ch4. Pp 119-144

## Further reading

* Chakrabarty, D. (2009). The climate of history: Four theses. *Critical inquiry*, *35*(2), 197- 222.
* Chakrabarty, D. (2014). Climate and capital: On conjoined histories. *Critical Inquiry*, 41(1), 1-23.
* Crosby, A. W. (2015). Ecological Imperialism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
* Hornborg, A. (2019). Colonialism in the Anthropocene: The Political Ecology of the Money-Energy-Technology Complex. *Journal of Human Rights and the Environment*, 10(1), 7- 21.
* Jonsson, F. A. (2010). Rival ecologies of global commerce: Adam Smith and the natural historians. *The American historical review*, *115*(5), 1342-1363.
* Albritton Jonsson, F. (2012). The industrial revolution in the Anthropocene. *The Journal of Modern History*, *84*(3), 679-696.
* Albritton Jonsson, F. (2012). The industrial revolution in the Anthropocene. *The Journal of Modern History*, *84*(3), 679-696.
* Malm, A. (2012) Steam: Nineteenth-century Mechanization and the Power of Capital in Hornborg, A., Clark, B. and Hermele, K. (eds.) Ecology and Power, Abingdon: Routledge, 108-123.
* Malm, A. (2016). *Fossil capital: The rise of steam power and the roots of global warming*. Verso Books.

# Week (4) The finance-nature nexus

## Core reading

* Kay, K. (2018). A hostile takeover of nature? Placing value in conservation finance. *Antipode*, *50*(1), 164-183.
* Neville, K. J., Cook, J., Baka, J., Bakker, K., & Weinthal, E. S. (2019). Can shareholder advocacy shape energy governance? The case of the US antifracking movement. *Review of International Political Economy*, *26*(1), 104-133.
* Grindsted, T. S. (2020). Trading on earthquakes–Algorithmic financialization of tectonic events at global stock exchanges. *Geoforum*, *108*, 80-87.

## Further reading

* Bryant, G. (2019). *Carbon markets in a climate-changing capitalism*. Cambridge University Press.
* Caldecott, B. (2017). Introduction to special issue: stranded assets and the environment.

*Journal of Sustainable Finance and Investment*, 7(1): 1-13.

* DiMuzio, T. (2012). Capitalizing a future unsustainable: Finance, energy and the fate of market civilization. *Review of International Political Economy*, *19*(3), 363-388.
* Hornborg, A. (2019). *Nature, Society, and Justice in the Anthropocene: Unravelling the Money- Energy-Technology Complex*. Cambridge University Press.
* Knox-Hayes, J. (2013). The spatial and temporal dynamics of value in financialization: Analysis of the infrastructure of carbon markets. *Geoforum*, *50*: 117-128.
* Ouma, S. (2016). From financialization to operations of capital: Historicizing and disentangling the finance–farmland-nexus. *Geoforum*, *72*: 82-93.
* Spash, C. L. (2010). The brave new world of carbon trading. *New Political Economy*, *15*(2): 169-195.

# Week (5) Fuelling and feeding global capitalism

## Core reading

* Weis, T. (2013). The meat of the global food crisis. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *40*(1): 65- 85.
* Dauvergne, P., & Neville, K. J. (2010). Forests, food, and fuel in the tropics: the uneven social and ecological consequences of the emerging political economy of biofuels. *The Journal of peasant studies*, *37*(4): 631-660.
* Huber, M. (2013). Fueling capitalism: oil, the regulation approach, and the ecology of capital. *Economic Geography*, *89*(2): 171-194.

## Further reading

* Kuzemko, C. (2019). Re-scaling IPE: local government, sustainable energy and change. *Review of International Political Economy*, *26*(1): 80-103.
* Baker, L., Newell, P., & Phillips, J. (2014). The political economy of energy transitions: the case of South Africa. *New Political Economy*, *19*(6): 791-818.
* Newell, P. (2013). *Globalization and the environment: Capitalism, ecology and power*. John Wiley & Sons.
* Van de Graaf, T., & Bradshaw, M. (2018). Stranded wealth: rethinking the politics of oil in an age of abundance. *International Affairs*, *94*(6): 1309-1328.

# Week (6) The future of growth

## Core reading

* Boulding, K.E. (1966) The economics of the coming spaceship earth. Spaceship Earth. In Jarrett, H.E. (ed.) Environmental Quality in a Growing Economy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. pp 3-14.
* Hickel, J., & Kallis, G. (2020). Is green growth possible? *New political economy*, 25(4): 469- 486.
* Jacobs, M. (2012). *Green growth: economic theory and political discourse* (No. 92). Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment.
* Kallis, G., Kostakis, V., Lange, S., Muraca, B., Paulson, S., & Schmelzer, M. (2018). Research on degrowth. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 43: 291-316.
* Meckling, J., & Allan, B. B. (2020). The evolution of ideas in global climate policy. *Nature Climate Change*, 1-5.

## Further reading

* Coyle, D. (2015). *GDP: a brief but affectionate history-revised and expanded edition*. Princeton University Press.
* Hallegatte, S., Heal, G., Fay, M., & Treguer, D. (2011). *From growth to green growth-a framework*. The World Bank.
* Jackson, T. (2016). *Prosperity without growth: foundations for the economy of tomorrow*. Routledge.
* Kallis, G. (2011). In defence of degrowth. *Ecological economics*, *70*(5): 873-880.
* Latouche, S. (2009). *Farewell to growth*. Polity.
* Stiglitz, J. E., Sen, A., & Fitoussi, J. P. (2010). *Mismeasuring our lives: Why GDP doesn't add up*. The New Press.

# Week (7) The Green New Deal

## Core reading

* Aronoff, K., Battistoni, A., Cohen, D. A., & Riofrancos, T. (2019). *A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal*. Verso Books. Introduction. Pp 14-34.
* Pettifor, A. (2019). *The Case for the Green New Deal*. Verso. Intro & Chs 1 & 2.
* Pollin, R. (2018). De-Growth vs A Green New Deal. *New Left Review.* July-August. (112): 5-25.

## Further reading

* Barbier, E. B. (2010). *A global green new deal: Rethinking the economic recovery*. Cambridge University Press.
* Dale, G. (2019). Degrowth: with or against the Green New Deal?.
* Huber, M. T. (2019). Ecological politics for the working class. *Catalyst: a Journal of Theory and Strategy*, *3*(1).
* Klein, N. (2019). *On Fire: The (burning) Case for a Green New Deal*. Simon & Schuster.
* Rifkin, J. (2019). *The Green New Deal: Why the Fossil Fuel Civilization Will Collapse by 2028, and the Bold Economic Plan to Save Life on Earth*. St. Martin's Press.