

Anarchism: Theories and Ethnographies

REES 1631/ANTH2620

FALL 2023

Tentative syllabus – Subject to Change

Prof. K. R. Ghodsee

Monday and Wednesday 1:45-3:15

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30-1:30 or by appointment

Williams Hall 750

“That we are Utopians is well known. So Utopian are we that we go the length of believing that the Revolution can and ought to assure shelter, food, and clothes to all...”

-Pyotr Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*

Course Description: Although born in the West through the works of William Godwin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, anarchism as a political theory was subsequently developed by a variety of Russian and Ukrainian theorists and activists, including Mikhail Bakunin, Lev Tolstoy, Pyotr Kropotkin, Nestor Makhno, and Emma Goldman (in exile in the United States). Anarchism fundamentally questions the need for political power and authority, particularly as embodied in a state. As a political theory, anarchism makes moral claims about the importance of individual liberty and presents a positive theory of human flourishing that is based on ideals of non-coercive consensus building. This course investigates the 19th century theoretical foundations of Russian and Ukrainian anarchist theory through a close examination of key texts from the 19th and early 20th centuries and includes ethnographic explorations of anarchist practices in eastern Europe in the 21st century. All readings will be in English.

Course Objectives: In this course students gain knowledge about basic political and philosophical theories of anarchism as discussed by Russian and Ukrainian activists in the 19th and 20th centuries and investigates ethnographic accounts of anarchist practices in eastern Europe in the 21st century. The course takes multidisciplinary approach in that examines the historical roots anarchist theories and their relevance for the present day. By exposing students to the critical examination of anarchist theory and history, the course aims to challenge the assumption of contemporary statist rhetoric. At the end of the course students should develop critical thinking skills to help them interrogate the legitimacy of power and authority as embodied in democracies, autocracies, and monarchies, and will be able to speak and write about these issues with competence and confidence.

Required readings:

Books:

Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

Maple Raza, *Bastards of Utopia: Living Radical Politics After Socialism*

David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*

All other readings online at: www.theanarchistlibrary.org or www.Marxists.org or on Canvas

William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1793)

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government* (1840)

Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State* (1882)

Lev Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1884)

Pytor Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread* (1892)

Pytor Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid* (1902)

The Nestor Makhno Archive (<http://www.nestormakhno.info/english/index.htm>)

Alexandra Kollontai, “The Workers Opposition”

Course Requirements

Reading Reflections – (20 percent)

- Ten 350-word reading reflections on any ten readings due before the reading is required for class (half credit if turned in after the reading is discussed)

Midterm exam– (25 Percent)

Final Paper Draft – (10 percent)

- Students must complete an original research paper on a topic pre-approved by the professor

Final Paper – (30 percent)

- Students must complete an original research paper on a topic pre-approved by the professor.

Attendance and Participation – (15 percent)

- *Regular attendance is expected. Failure to attend may affect your final grade. Please speak to me directly about absences.*
- *Students are allowed three free absences and will lose points for each unexcused absence thereafter. I will begin keep track of absences after the 3rd class meeting. PLEASE*

NOTE: IF YOU JOIN THE COURSE AFTER THE FOURTH CLASS MEETING, YOU WILL HAVE EXPENDED ALL FREE ABSENCES.

Email:

From time to time, I will need to make announcements about the course outside of class time. I ask that you please check your email at least once every two days and be sure to read any emails from me.

Academic Integrity:

It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University's Code of Academic Integrity. Instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for adjudication. See: http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html

Grading:

Grading will not be done on a curve, and grading will **not** be done in Canvas.

For papers: All papers will be assigned a numeric value corresponding with a letter grade using the following criteria:

- A-range = outstanding, nearly flawless work; assignment(s) completed thoroughly; technically excellent; evidence of creativity and/or inspiration, deep contextual grasp of issues and connections among issues; and ability to synthesize individual elements into broader narratives or analyses.
- B-range = good work; all aspects of assignment(s) completed thoroughly and competently; technically competent (though perhaps not perfect) in spelling, grammar, format, citations; presentation adequate; does not consistently show inspiration, creativity, deeper grasp of connections, interpretations, and/or synthesis among elements.
- C-range = less than fully satisfactory work; assignment(s) not completed thoroughly or according to instructions; basic grasp of issues not always evident; more than occasional technical flaws.
- D = basic work of course (or assignment) not done, little effort evident.

Assignments in the class are not weighted. At the end of the semester the numeric grade will be converted into letter grades according to the following system: 99-100 (A+), 94-98 (A), 90-93 (A-), 87-89(B+), 83-86 (B), 80-82 (B-), 77-79 (C+), 73-76(C), 70-72 (C-), 60-69 (D), 60 and below (F)

THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP OR EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS IN THIS CLASS

Electronic Devices

No laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices are allowed in the classroom without a special permission from the college. Please turn your mobile phones off. Students should not use recording devices without previous consent of the instructor.



Week One: Introduction

Wednesday, August 30, 2023: Class description and introductions

Week Two: What is Anarchism? Part I

Wednesday, September 6, 2023 - Read: Emma Goldman, “Anarchism: What it really stands for.” (pdfs on Canvas)



Week Three: What is Anarchism? Part II

Monday, September 11, 2023 - Read: “Anarchism” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/anarchism/>)

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 - David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography*, “Chapter 5: Direct Action, Anarchism, Direct Democracy” (pdf on Canvas)

Week Four: Imagining Anarchist Utopia

Monday, September 18, 2023 – Read: Alexandra Bogdanov, *Red Star*, pg. 23 to 81 (book)

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 - Read: Alexandra Bogdanov, *Red Star*, pg. 81 to 140 (book)

Week Five: Western Foundations

Monday, September 25, 2023 – Read: John Clarke, *The Philosophical Anarchism of William Godwin*, “Introduction” and “Property” (pdfs on Canvas)



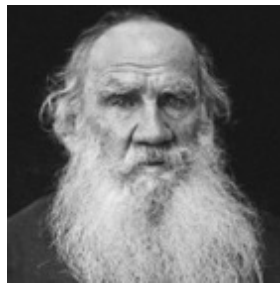
Wednesday, September 27, 2023 -Read: Pierre Joseph Proudhon “Explanations Presented to the Public Minister on the Right of Property” (<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/economics/proudhon/1842/explanations-presented-to-the-public.html>) and “Proudhon, Property and Possession” (pdf on Canvas)

Week Six: Christian Anarchism

Monday, October 2, 2023 – Read: Janko Lavrin “The Bogomils and Bogomilism” and Janko Lavrin, “Tolstoy and Gandhi” (pdfs on Canvas)



Wednesday, October 4, 2023 - Read: Robert Higgs, “Tolstoy’s Manifesto on the State, Christian Anarchy, and Pacifism” (pdf); and Lev Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, “Conclusion” parts I-VI (<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/leo-tolstoy-the-kingdom-of-god-is-within-you>).



Week Seven: Bakunin

Monday, October 9, 2023 – Read: “Bakunin” (<https://spartacus-educational.com/USAbakunin.htm>) and Bakunin *God and the State* Chapters I and II (<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/godstate/index.htm#intro>)

Wednesday, October 11, 2023 - Read: Bakunin *God and the State* Chapters III and IV (<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/godstate/index.htm#intro>)



Week Eight: Kropotkin, Part 1

Monday, October 16, 2023 – Read: Brian Morris, *Kropotkin*, “Introduction,” “A Biographical Note,” “Mutual Aid,” and “The History of Anarchism.” (pdfs on Canvas)

Wednesday, October 18, 2023 – IN CLASS MIDTERM

Week Nine: Ursula Le Guin

Monday, October 23, 2023 - Read: Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*, Chapter 1 through 7



Wednesday, October 25, 2023 - Read: Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*, Chapter 8 through 13 and Derek Jaeckle “Interpersonal Ethics in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed*.”

Week Ten – Kropotkin Part II

Monday, October 30, 2023 - Read: Pytor Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, “Chapter 2: Well-being for all,” “Chapter 3: Anarchist Communism,” and “Chapter 6: Dwellings.” <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/kropotkin-peter/1892/bread.htm>



Wednesday, November 1, 2023 -Read: Pytor Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, “Chapter 9: The Need for Luxury,” and “Chapter 12: Objections.” <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/kropotkin-peter/1892/bread.htm>

Week Eleven – Kropotkin Part III

Monday, November 6, 2023 - Read: Pyotr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*, “Chapter 7: Mutual Aid Amongst Ourselves” (<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-mutual-aid-a-factor-of-evolution#toc8>)

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 - Read: “Chapter 8: Mutual Aid Amongst Ourselves (continued)” (<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-mutual-aid-a-factor-of-evolution#toc9>)

Week Twelve: Emma Goldman

Monday, November 13, 2023 - Read: Emma Goldman, “Anarchy and the Sex Question,” “Marriage” and “The Tragedy of Women’s emancipation” all at: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/goldman/index.htm>; In class film: Emma Goldman: An Exceedingly Dangerous Woman (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BviTcbeRz8o>). I will also post the video file to Canvas, and it is available on Amazon Prime if you want a higher quality file. It is a PBS documentary and may also be available through the Penn library.

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 -Read: Emma Goldman, “Jealousy: Causes and a Possible Cure,” “Marriage and Love” and “The Truth about the Bolsheviks” all at: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/goldman/index.htm>

Week Thirteen: Alexandra Kollontai and The Worker’s Opposition

Monday, November 20, 2023 - Read: Alexandra Kollontai, The Workers Opposition “Individual or Collective Management?” and “The Trade Unions: Their Role and Problems” online at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1921/workers-opposition/index.htm>

Wednesday, November 22, 2023 – Thanksgiving - **NO CLASS**

Week Fourteen: Ethnographies of Anarchism

Monday, November 27, 2023 - Read: Emma Goldman “Bolsheviks shooting Anarchists” and “There is no communism in Russia” both at: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/goldman/index.htm>, and **“THE ORGANIZATIONAL PLATFORM OF THE GENERAL UNION OF ANARCHISTS”** and **"The Ukrainian Utopia that Almost Existed."**

Wednesday, November 29, 2023 -Read: Read: *Bastards of Utopia*, (book) “Introduction” and “Chapter 2”

Week Fifteen: Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology

Monday, December 4, 2023 – Read: *Bastards of Utopia*, (book) “Chapter 3” and “Chapter 5”

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 Read: David Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* (pamphlet)

Final Paper First Drafts Due

Week Sixteen: Final Discussion

Monday, December 11, 2023 – Discussion and celebration

**Final papers due on December 15, 2023 at 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time.
Late paper will lose 2 points per 24-hour period beginning from 5:00pm on
December 15th.**