

Political Science 287/487: Theories of Political Economy
Instructor: James Johnson (jd.johnson@rochester.edu)
Spring 2019 ~ M-W 9:00-10:15
Office Hours: Monday 2:00-3:30 * Harkness Hall 312 (x5-0622)

“There is little discussion either of the feasibility or desirability of workplace democracy today. ... [Y]et the institution of employment, one of the most central institutions of our society, remains undemocratic.”

~ Carole Pateman (Presidential Address to APSA – 2010)

This class is an intellectual experiment prompted by an actual political-economic experiment. Several American cities, including Rochester, are exploring the use of worker cooperatives – firms that are owned and democratically controlled by the people who work in them – as part of broader community economic development initiatives. Cooperatives are proposed both as a remedy for economic hardship and in hopes of empowering local communities politically. This experiment prompts a whole set of questions at the intersection of political theory and economics. The course explores some of those questions. Mostly I am interested in whether the expectations reformers are placing on worker coops are plausible. I am interested, too, in getting you to think about the predicament we face in the city where you spend ten months of the year as students in the College.

Grading: I do not care what grade you get in the course. By that I mean that while I would like you to do well, and hope that happens, whether you do so or not really depends on you. If you do the required work, it is very likely a good grade will follow; if not, it is almost certain that a good grade will not follow.

Please note! There is no party line in the course, meaning I do not care if you agree or disagree with me, with one another, or with any (or all?) of the readings. I care about your willingness to stick your neck out, to think critically, and to articulate *your* views clearly both orally and in writing.

Participation: The course will be run primarily the way I run graduate seminars. Given the nature of the undertaking it is imperative that students actively participate in class. That means that I expect students not only to keep up with the reading, but also to read with care and to demonstrate this in class discussions. The regularity of your participation and especially your willingness to stick your neck out in seminar discussion will constitute 20% of your grade for the course. I will keep track of who speaks in class for this purpose.

Policy on Attendance: Given the nature of the class attendance is not optional. If you need to miss class for some reason, please let me know.

Policy on Electronic Devices: My policy on electronic devices in class (meaning any screen connected to silicon chips) is restrictive. No cell phones, laptops or tablets in class! The exception is if you have a documented learning disability that requires using a screen centered device. *This means if you have readings or notes you will need in class, get them off of your devices and onto paper.*

Written Assignments: Beyond classroom participation there are two types of written assignment for the course.

(1) Your contribution to a group data gathering project. I will explain this in class. But essentially, we will work as a cooperative to conduct a census on what is known as the “solidarity economy” in Upstate and Western New York (everything above NYC). We will divide into groups and each group will take responsibility for a geographical area or a type of cooperative entity. The task will be to scour the web and record basic information about these enterprises. Ultimately, all this data will be made available via a web page I am going to design and house here at UR. Your contribution to this project will constitute 30% of your grade for the course.

(2) A final research paper on a topic related to the topics we cover in the course. I am less interested in the number of pages you submit than in the quality of the argument and evidence you bring to bear on your chosen topic. But since you will undoubtedly obsess about page lengths, think in the area of 20 pages. You should speak to me (in person!!!) about possible subjects for your paper no later than week nine (March 13th). The paper is due the day we would have a final exam if there were one in the course (there isn't one!). Your grade on this assignment will constitute 50% of your overall course grade.

Policy on late assignments: Except in the direst circumstances I very much frown upon late assignments. I will deduct one third of a letter grade for every day either the case study or the final paper are late. (This means if your grade would have been a B+, one day late gets you a deduction to B, two days a deduction to B-, etc.). If you anticipate a problem getting an assignment in on time (due to, say, religious holidays, travel for athletic teams, etc.) please speak to me *in advance*. I will make reasonable accommodation to address such difficulties.

Statement on Academic Honesty: I operate on the assumption that students are familiar with and abide by the College policies on Academic Honesty. If you are not familiar with those policies, please go to the Board on Academic Honesty web page and make yourself familiar. You can find that page here: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>.

I will provide specific instructions for each course assignment. In any event, I take a very dim view of cheating and plagiarism. It makes me cranky. So, I will refer any and all suspected instances to the Board on Academic Honesty. The easiest way to avoid such unpleasantness is to not succumb to temptations to cheat, plagiarize, bend the rules, exploit loopholes, and so forth. As a default, if you are unsure about whether something is “allowed” ask me.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability of any sort that you believe will impact your ability to meet the expectations laid out above I encourage you to speak with me in person as early in the term as is possible. We can make reasonable accommodation regarding the assignments.

Readings

The required reading for this course is difficult, it is diverse, and there is a lot of it. Moreover, none of the reading is presented in predigested textbook form. In both senses the reading load for this course might seem totally unreasonable! My excuse is that the problems we will be addressing are crucially important and complex. In that sense, it is imperative that you do the reading and that you do so prior to class. I have NOT ordered books (marked *) at the University Bookstore. All are readily available in used paperback versions from your preferred e-purveyor. I

will make the books and other readings available on Blackboard and through reserve at the library. Many of the assigned readings are, as is clear from the syllabus, available directly on line – I have provided links where this is the case.

Western NY as a Developing Country?

Cohen, Cathy and Michael C. Dawson. 1993. “Neighborhood Poverty and African American Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 87:286-302.

Kneebone, Elizabeth, Carey Nadeau, and Alan Berube. 2011. *The Re-Emergence of Concentrated Poverty: Metropolitan Trends in the 2000s*. Metropolitan Policy Program. Brookings Institution.

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2011/11/03-poverty-kneebone-nadeau-berube/1103_poverty_kneebone_nadeau_berube.pdf

Kneebone, Elizabeth. 2014. *The Growth and Spread of Concentrated Poverty, 2000 to 2008-2012*. Policy Brief. Brookings Institution.

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2014/concentrated-poverty#/M10420>

Doherty, Edward. 2013. *Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area*. Rochester Area Community Foundation.

<http://roc.democratandchronicle.com/assets/pdf/A22162251210.PDF>

Doherty, Edward. 2015. *Benchmarking Rochester’s Poverty: A 2015 Update and Deeper Analysis of Poverty in the City of Rochester*. Rochester Area Community Foundation.

<http://www.racf.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Poverty%20Report%20Update%202015-0108.pdf>

Jargowsky, Paul. 2015. *The Architecture of Segregation: Civil Unrest, the Concentration of Poverty & Public Policy*. Century Foundation.

http://www.tcf.org/assets/downloads/Jargowsky_ArchitectureofSegregation.pdf

EdBuild. 2016. *Fault Lines – America’s Most Segregating School District Boundaries*.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/edbuild-public-data/data/fault+lines/EdBuild-Fault-Lines-2016.pdf>

Anderson, Elizabeth. 2011. “Why Racial Integration Remains an Imperative,” *Poverty & Race* 20(4): 1-2,17-19.

Thinking About Political-Economic Development

* Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Knopf.

Democracy: Publics, Problems, and Pragmatism I

* Dewey, John. 1927. *The Public and Its Problems*. Swallow Press.

Dewey, Jon. 1939. “Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us,” in *The Political Writings* Ed. Debra Morris & Ian Shapiro. Hackett.

Democracy: Publics, Problems, and Pragmatism II

* Unger, Roberto Mangabeira. 2009. *The Left Alternative*. Verso.
<http://www.robertounger.com/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/the-left-alternative.pdf>

Knight, Jack and James Johnson. 2007. "The Priority of Democracy: A Pragmatist Approach to Political-Economic Institutions and the Burden of Justification."
American Political Science Review 101: 47-61.

Worker Cooperatives: A Potential Partial Remedy to Pressing Problems?

Riley, David. 2015. "To Fight Poverty, City Eyes Co-op Businesses," *Democrat & Chronicle* (8 February).
<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2015/02/08/rochester-democracycollaborative-cooperative-businesses-worker-poverty/23090949/>

Riley, David. 2016. "Mayor: Worker Coops Can Curb Poverty," *Democrat & Chronicle* (24 February).
<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2016/02/23/mayor-lovely-warren-rochester-worker-cooperatives-can-curb-poverty-democracycollaborative/80809332/?hootPostID=f7d6c9de8b8e03c5eec17e65e8ce9dde#>

Riley, David. 2016a. "What Can Cleveland Co-ops Teach Rochester?" *Democrat & Chronicle* (10 April). <http://www.democratandchronicle.com/story/news/2016/04/10/mayor-lovely-warren-cleveland-evergreen-cooperatives-co-ops-teach-rochester/82436948/>

Palmer, Tim. 2015. *US Worker Cooperatives: A State of the Sector*. Democracy at Work Institute. <http://institute.usworker.coop/resources/us-worker-cooperatives-state-sector>

Kerr, Camille. 2015. *A Brief Visual Guide to Understanding Employee Ownership Structures*. Democracy at Work Institute.
<http://institute.usworker.coop/sites/default/files/resources/EOStructures.pdf>

Rogers, Joel. 2013. "Using State and Local Policies," *The Good Society* 22: 91-109.

Alperovitz, Gar, Ted Howard and Thad Williamson. 2010. "The Cleveland Model." *The Nation* (11 February). <http://www.thenation.com/article/cleveland-model>

Epstein, Keith. 2015. "Rebuilding the Rust Belt," *Politico Magazine* (19 February).
<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/02/what-works-cleveland-115324.html#.VdNqZ0WPib8>

Different Models: Rochester & Jackson

Bonanno, Jessica, Violeta Duncan, and Ted Howard. 2016. *Rochester's Market Driven Community Cooperatives Corporation: A Feasibility Analysis & Implementation Plan*. Democracy Collaborative. <http://democracycollaborative.org/content/rochester-s-market-driven-community-cooperatives-corporation-feasibility-analysis>

Akuno, Kali & Ajamu Nangwaya, eds. 2017. *Jackson Rising*. Daraja Press. Chapters 1, 3-6, 8.

Institutional Mechanisms: Markets, Firms, States

* Lindblom, Charles. 2002. *The Market System*. Yale University Press.
[Available as e-book via UofR Library: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/rochester/Doc?id=10170836>]

Coase, Ronald. 1937. "The Nature of the Firm," *Economica* 4: 386-405.

Albert Hirschman. 1970. *Exit, Voice & Loyalty*. Harvard University Press. [Pages 21-54; 76-105; 120-6].

Governing the Firm

* Dow, Gregory. 2003. *Governing the Firm: Workers Control in Theory & Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
[Available as e-book via UofR Library: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/rochester/Doc?id=10070239>]

Democratizing Finance?

Lazonick, William. 2014. "Profits Without Prosperity," *Harvard Business Review* (September) 46-55.

Block, Fred. 2014. "Democratizing Finance," *Politics & Society* 42: 3-28.

Nembhard, Jessica Gordon. 2013. "Community Development Credit Unions: Securing and Protecting Assets in Black Communities," *Review of Black Political Economy* 40:459-490.

Dicamillo, Nathan. 2018. "The Little Bank that Could," *New York Times* (April 13).
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/business/the-little-bank-that-could.html>

Problems of Implementation & Transition I

* Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons*. Cambridge University Press.

James Tully. 2013. "Two Ways of Realizing Justice and Democracy: Linking Amartya Sen and Elinor Ostrom," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*. 16: 220-232.

Problems of Implementation & Transition II

Abell, Hilary. 2014. *Worker Cooperatives: Pathways to Scale*. Democracy Collaborative.
<http://democracycollaborative.org/workercoops>

Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis. 1993. "A Political and Economic Case for the Democratic Enterprise," *Economics & Philosophy* 9:75-100.

Elster, Jon. 1989. "From Here to There; or, If Cooperative Ownership Is So Desirable, Why are There So Few Cooperatives?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 6: 93-111.

Fleurbaey, Marc. 2008. "Workplace Democracy as a Public Good," *Revue de Philosophie Économique* 9:110-28.

Problems of Implementation & Transition III

* Nembhard, Jessica Gordon. 2014. *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice*. Penn State University Press.

Bachrach, Peter and Aryeh Botwinick. 1992. *Power & Empowerment*. Temple University Press. Chapters 2-3, 5-8.

Assessing Cooperatives & Workplace Democracy: Gender & Race

Miller, Genna. 2012. "'Gender Trouble': Investigating Gender and Economic Democracy in Worker Cooperatives in the United States," *Review of Radical Political Economics* 44:8–22.

Miller, Genna. 2011. "Gender and Participation in Decision-Making in Labor-Managed Firms," *Industrial & Economic Democracy* 32: 87–113.

Barker, Jade & Patricia Cumbie. 2017. "Everyone Welcome? Examining Race & Food Coops," *Cooperative Grocer* (September-October) 24-26.

Barker, Jade & Patricia Cumbie. 2017. "Everyone Welcome? Personal Narratives About Race & Food Coops." CDS Consulting.

Borowiak, Craig, *et. al.* 2017. "Navigating the Fault Lines: Race and Class in Philadelphia's Solidarity Economy," *Antipode* 50:577–603.

Schedule

January

16 Introduction

21 NO CLASS MLK Holiday

23 Cohen-Dawson; Kneebone (2); Doherty (2)

28 EdBuild; Anderson; Jargowsky

30 Discussion of Group Project

February

4 *Sen

6 *Sen

11 *Dewey (2)

13 *Dewey

18 *Unger

20 *Unger; Knight & Johnson

27 Riley (3); Palmer; Kerr; Rogers

27 Alperowitz; Epstein; Bonnano

March

4 * Lindblom

6 *Lindblom

11 Spring Break

13 Spring Break

18 Hirschman; Coase

20 *Dow (Chapters 1-7).

25 *Dow (Chapters 8-12).

Group Projects Due

27 Block; Nembhard;

DiCamillo; Lazonick

April

1 *Ostrom Chapters 1-3)

3 *Ostrom Chapters 4-6); Tully

8 Abell; Elster;

10 Fleurbay; Bowles-Gintis

21 *Nembhard

23 *Nembhard

28 Bachrach-Botwinick

30 Miller (2); Barker & Cumbie (2); Borowiak

May

8 Final Paper Due (5 pm)