

Capitalism in Crisis

This course is not a critique of capitalism as a system in itself but rather a critical look at its unintentional or intentional mismanagement which led to the recent global financial collapse.

What factors contributed to the crisis? How is it possible that so few saw what was coming or that so many were able to ignore the warning signs? By addressing these questions and others, this course is designed to help you connect the dots and come to a better understanding of the current dimensions of the financial markets where you will soon play your own role.

The following are some examples of subjects that will be addressed in this course: subprime loans, hedge funds, derivative trading, over-the-counter financial trading, toxic assets, neoliberal economics, deregulation, etc.

Through the use of film, websites, radio and television extracts, documentaries, press articles and case studies, we will critically analyze, discuss and debate the issues at the root of our current economic situation.

Evaluations

TP1: 06/12/2013

A 40 minute written exam that covers key vocabulary, concepts and subjects discussed in the previous 7 classes. Your teacher will inform you of what may be and will not surely be on the exam.

Example question: Please describe how credit default swaps work and what role they played in the 2007 financial crisis.

TP2: the entire semester

This evaluation is based upon your participation in each class. For example, homework, group work, pair work, listening attentively, focusing on the task at hand, contribution to class activities and discussions, etc. Throughout a class, the teacher will give students a grade based on their involvement in various activities: 3 = excellent; 2 = good; 1 = OK; 0 = unsatisfactory. At the end of each class, these scores will be totaled for each student. Over the semester, the class scores will be totaled to give each student a final participation grade out of 20.

TP3: 29/11/2013 – 10/01/2013

A 10 to 15 minute oral presentation with a partner. The topic of the presentation relates to this week's homework, so we will discuss the details of TP3 at the beginning of next class.