



# How (not) to Read Marx

Masterclass by Samuel Chambers

February 20, 2018, 2-5pm

**Location:** UNSW Sydney, Kensington Campus, AGSM Building, room LG06 (G27 of campus map)

**Reading:** *Capital vol. 1*, chapters 6–7, pp. 270–306 (Penguin Edition)

In this class we will read three dozen pages from the first volume of *Capital* (chapters 6 and 7). The middle dozen are some of the most famous and oft-quoted sentences in Marx's corpus, while the dozen before and after are much less celebrated or cited. In one sense the point of the class will be a simple lesson on the hermeneutic circle. The first part of chapter 7 is frequently used as evidence to support claims about Marx's belief in the universality of labour and its normative importance, or to distinguish normatively (as so many philosophers have done before and after) between the labor of animals and the unique labor of humans. In this class we will place those well-worn passages in context by working carefully on the set-up (in the form of Chapter 6's discussion of labour-power as a commodity) and the completion (in the form of Marx's own contrast between the "labour process" and the "valorization process"). This approach may lead to an unexpected result: that the middle dozen are the least important pages, and that they don't really say what they've been taken to mean.

## About Samuel Chambers

Samuel A. Chambers is Professor of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, where he teaches political theory, cultural politics, and political economy. He co-edits the journal *Contemporary Political Theory* and is series co-editor of Routledge's *Innovators in Political Theory*. His interests are broad and interdisciplinary – ranging from central issues in social and political theory, to engagements with contemporary feminist and queer theory, to contributions to critical television studies. All of his work maintains a core concern with a sort of "glue" that holds together things – e.g. political regimes, sex/gender identities, pedagogical relations – in a way that is neither narrowly political (in the traditional sense of legislation or public policy), nor reductively socio-biological, nor grounded in ethics or morality à la so-called normative political philosophy. He has authored five books, edited four more, and published more than thirty journal articles, along with numerous chapters and essays. His monograph *There's No Such Thing as The Economy: Essays on Capitalist Value* will be published by Punctum Books in mid-2018.

Advanced students and early career academics from all disciplines welcome. You are expected to read the text for the class in advance.

Free admission, but due to limited seating please email the organizer if you would like to attend: Heikki Ikäheimo, UNSW Sydney, [h.ikaheimo@unsw.edu.au](mailto:h.ikaheimo@unsw.edu.au)