

## TBLR – *Norwegian Researcher School in the Humanities*

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### *PhD-Seminar*

## Marx revisited: Temporalities of neo-liberalism

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Paris, FMSH, January 9-11, 2019

Application deadline: 3<sup>rd</sup> of December

The 2018 bicentenary of Karl Marx sees a renewed interest in his writings. If the beginning of the new millennium marked a low point in Marxist critical theory's academic standing – epitomized in Bruno Latour's highly influential 2001 essay, "Why has critique run out of steam?" –, the shock of the 2008 financial collapse and ensuing debt crises paved the way for an unexpected comeback. Given the dominant neo-liberal paradigm's inability to provide the tools – in theory as in practice – to cope with the most pressing economic issues of the current crisis, Marx resurfaced as the central theoretical resource for a critical approach to the economic order underpinning and formatting the lived reality of 21<sup>st</sup> century capitalist society. Works such as Italian philosopher's Maurizio Lazaratto's *The Making of Indebted Man*, British geographer David Harvey's *A Companion to Marx' Capital*, American political scientist Jodi Dean's *The Communist Horizon* and French economist Thomas Piketty's *The Capital in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* all herald a remarkable and unexpected "return to Marx". While these influential works' primarily foreground the scientific and political potential of the Marxian approach to the socio-economic realities and societal biases of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the renewed interest in Marx has also spawned a wide range of new research initiatives in the humanities and the aesthetic disciplines often in conjunction with other theoretical impulses. The neo-Marxian concept of "Immaterial labor" has thus permitted a productive exchange between Foucauldian analyses of information society's protocols of subjectivation with Marxian analyses of the new economies of debt. The temporal aspects of the current credit economies – "banking on the future" – also provide a platform for an analysis of the political geographies of global neo-liberalism. Re-articulations of the notions of political agency conceptualize the entities of collective action in terms such as multitudes and crowds reinvestigate the central ideas of communism. Finally, thanks to Piketty's striking use of literary examples drawn from 19<sup>th</sup> century novels, within the study of 19C literature such themes as heritage, finances, and credit economy have converged into a field of study in its own right.

Taking these new initiatives as an invitation to revisit Karl Marx not only as an economic thinker but also as a philosopher of culture in its widest sense, the seminar will focus on the recent re-articulations of Marx. The program will consist of plenary lectures, presentations and text sessions (supervised discussion of theoretical texts in groups).

The formula of the seminar differs slightly different from earlier events as the first day (and possibly parts of the second) will be dedicated to the group work with theory texts. We therefore invite participants to volunteer as presenters of one of the texts from the reading list. The format will be one-hour sessions with 15-20 minutes presentation. The group will be divided into two or three groups for the text discussions (depending on the facility situation). Day 2 and 3 will be organized around a lecture, with presentations of projects or project-related issues that pertain to the overall Marx theme of the seminar. The seminar ends at three o'clock day 3 in order for those who return Friday will be able to get the last flights to Scandinavia in the evening.

**Keynotes:** Keynote addresses will be delivered by Michel Feher (Goldsmith) and Jacob Lund (Aarhus Universitet).

**Venue:** FMSH, 54 bvd Raspail, 75006 Paris

**Application Process:** Due to the conference facilities a limited number of places are available. The number of participants will be limited to 15 (10 of which are reserved for participants from the TBLR consortium).

Those who would like to attend should fill in the application form by the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December (roughly 300 words). If the total number of applicants from TBLR exceeds 10, a selection will be made on the basis of relevance, previous participation in the TBLR program, affiliation and status of PhD training; beyond that, early applications will be prioritized.

**Program:** The program will consist of plenary key-note lectures (45-minute presentation, 45-minute discussion) and group work. Participant papers will be presented in a conventional conference setting (15-minute presentation, 15-minute discussion). In addition, there will be text reading sessions. Participants can choose between presenting their own work or a theoretical text for a text session.

**Working language:** English.

**Credits:** 2/5 ECTS. Participation and presentation will result in 2 ECTS, working over and submitting and editing a version of the presentation (12-15 pages) after the seminar, will yield an additional 3 ECTS. Signed and authorized course diplomas will be bestowed upon each PhD student participant on completion of the course.

**Hotel:** Hotel reservations will be made by the participants themselves. For participants from the TBLR 3 nights will be reimbursed (up to 100 Euros per night). A list of hotels will be provided at the TBLR website in due time.

**Meals:** All Lunches are covered by TBLR, so are the dinners in Wednesday and Thursday nights.

**Travel:** PhD students are expected to cover their own travel expenses.

**Texts:** Reading materials will be made available by Dropbox and will include texts by: Karl Marx, Mike Davis, Jodi Dean, Michel Feher, David Harvey, Johan F. Hartle, Maurizio Lazaratto and Thomas Piketty.

Deadline for application: Monday December 3rd. Please include a title and a short abstract (300 words) or indicate if you would prefer to present an article from the reading list (to be posted separately on the TBLR home page). The selection of participants will be ready by Friday the 7<sup>th</sup> of December.

For further information, please contact

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