

ATA 68B

Theorizing Neoliberalism

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Neoliberalism has become one of the most significant concepts or even a buzzword in explaining contemporary socio-economic, political and cultural transformations across the globe. In Turkish studies, the concept has also been widely used in the analyses of topics as diverse as economic policy, welfare reform, urban restructuring, law, memory and consumption, just to name a few.

This course aims to provide a selective introduction into the scholarly efforts to theorize the phenomena encapsulated under the grand abstraction, “neoliberalism.” One of our primary goals will be to explore the insights and limits neoliberalism as an explanatory device entails for understanding contemporary relations of power and inequality. We will begin by reading some of what might be considered classics in this literature, mostly focusing on macro theories. Then we will make use of works by geographers and anthropologists, which in critically evaluating the theoretical popularity of the term, have called into question the usefulness of conceptualizing neoliberalism as a monolithic force that spreads from the West to the rest of the world. Instead, these studies seek to explore how neoliberalism is socially produced in specific historical and geographic contexts in articulation with other socio-cultural formations and political projects. In doing so, they seek to highlight neoliberalism as a process that entails its own contingencies, contradictions, instabilities and limits. In the second half of the course, we will focus on such readings which will cover specific cases from different places including Latin America, Africa and East Asia. While our reading package does not include readings from Turkey, in class discussions, we will seek to relate our readings to contemporary transformations in Turkey. Also, students will have the option of writing a final essay on Turkey. Course evaluation will be based on three weekly reviews, a final essay and participation in class discussions.

A note on weekly papers:

You are required to write three (4-5) page-long papers on the weekly readings. These are not intended to be brief reaction papers. The aim is to focus closely on the primary/assigned reading and discuss the central argument of the theorist(s) through a close reading of the assigned material. More guidelines will be offered. The papers will be due the date of that weeks class. At least one paper is to be submitted before the end of the 6th week. Second paper is due before the end of the 10th week.

Week 1:

Introduction

Week 2:

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, David. 2009. "Is this Really the End of Neoliberalism?"
<http://www.counterpunch.org/harvey03132009.html>

Week 3:

Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. 2002. *Spaces of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Blackwell. (selection)

Week 4:

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. "The Essence of Neoliberalism." *Le Monde Diplomatique*
December. Available from <http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu>. Pp: 1-5.

Bourdieu, Pierre and L. Wacquant. 2001. "Neoliberal newspeak: notes on the new planetary
vulgate." *Radical Philosophy*. Pp: 1-6.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market I*. New York: New
Press.(selection)

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2003. *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market II*. New York: New Press.
(selection)

Wacquant, L. 1999. How penal common sense comes to Europeans Notes on the transatlantic
diffusion of the neoliberal doxa. Pp: 319-352. 3

Week 5

Clarke, John. 2004. *Changing Welfare, Changing States*. London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage. (Chapters 5-8: Pp: 88-160)

Kingfisher, Catherine, ed. 2002. *Western Welfare in Decline*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. (Chapters 2-5)

Rose, Nikolas . 1996a. "Governing "Advanced" Liberal Democracies." *In* Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government. Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose, eds. Pp. 37–64. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 6

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 2000. "Millennial Capitalism." *Public Culture* 12 (2):292-343.

Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta. 2002. "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality", *American Ethnologist* 29(4): 981–1002.

Kipnis, Andrew. 2008. "Audit Cultures: Neoliberal Governmentality, socialist legacy, or technologies of governing?" *American Ethnologist* 35 (2):275-289.

Ellison, James. 2009. "Governmentality and the Family: Neoliberal Choices and Emergent Kin Relations in Southern Ethiopia" *American Anthropologist* 111 (1): 81-92.

Week 7

Kingfisher, Catherine, and Jeff Maskovsky. 2008. "Introduction: The Limits of Neoliberalism." *Critique of Anthropology* 28 (2):115-126.
Critique of Anthropology 28 (2). Special Issue on Neoliberalism. (selection)

England, Kim and Kevin Ward, eds. 2007. *Neo-Liberalization: States, Networks, People*. Oxford: Blackwell. (Introduction)

Ganti, Tejaswini. 2014. "Neoliberalism." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 43:89-104.

Week 8

Ong, Aihwa. .2006. *Neoliberalism as exception: mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press.

Week 9

Ferguson, James. 2006. *Global shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press.

Week 10-12

Final papers