

24.201: Topics in History of Philosophy: Justice & Political Economy
Spring 2016
Second Paper Prompts

Due: Last class

Please select one of the following to respond to in 1800-2100 words. For more guidelines see "Guidelines for Papers".

1. What is a commodity? Why might one think that commodification is sometimes (always?) morally problematic? Consider these questions using at least one concrete example as a case study.
2. The end of slavery in Britain was economically costly, e.g., according to Anderson, in the British West Indies, the move to free labor caused an economic crisis. "Many plantations declared bankruptcy; merchant houses were ruined; and freed people's wages fell." (18) She argues, nevertheless, that it is a paradigm example of moral progress. Critically evaluate her argument.
3. According to Althusser, what is an ideological state apparatus and how does it work? Explain how, on his view, ISA's are relevant to establishing and maintaining a class structure, using some contemporary examples. Are you convinced by his account? Why or why not?
4. Why does Adam Smith think the division of labor arises? Describe his account and give at least one objection.
5. For both Karl Marx and Maria Mies, human labor is the foundation of the capitalist mode of production. Compare and contrast Marx and Mies on labor. Where do they agree? Where do they disagree?

MIT OpenCourseWare
<https://ocw.mit.edu>

24.201 Topics in the History of Philosophy: Justice & Political Economy
Spring 2016

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <https://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.