

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (1837)
Seminar of the NYC Marxist Hegel-Studies Collective
Spring 2016 / Conducted by Russell Dale

Hegel's philosophy has had a great influence on much of what has happened in the world since his time (1770 – 1831) and is crucial to understanding much of modern social thought and philosophy as well as to understanding Marxism and the socialist tradition in its varied aspects.

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* gives Hegel's theory of the nature and development of history. It is essential for understanding Hegel's overall project and therefore it is essential for understanding the works of Marx and Engels as well. Marx and Engels's own theory of *historical materialism* was explicitly developed in opposition to Hegel's theory of history. (We will read by reading Marx and Engels' *German Ideology* in which they first gave their *materialist* conception of history in a class next year, so this current course will be excellent preparation for that.)

This term (Spring 2016) we will read and discuss the entirety of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* over 12 weeks. The course will start with an historical and philosophical introduction so that nobody will be lost, even if they have not studied much philosophy or Hegel before.

An important part of our discussion will be the socially reactionary conclusions that Hegel ultimately drew, while at the same time Hegel's work became inspirational for so many radical and progressive thinkers as well, including Marx and Engels. We will give special attention to and treatment of the fact that Hegel had white-supremacist, racist views, and played an important role in the development of the pseudo-science of biological race theory. We will look at what these views mean for the tradition of thought that stems from Hegel, which includes some of the greatest thinkers of African descent in the twentieth century, such as W. E. B. DuBois, C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon and others.

The course will run for 12 weeks on Friday evenings from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM starting on Friday, February 19 and continuing until Friday, May 6, 2016. We will be reading the edition of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* translated by J. Sibree, and published by Dover. (Arrangements will be made for students who cannot afford to buy a copy of this book which costs about \$10 new online.)