ISS 4212 Contemporary Capitalism and Governance: Neo-Liberalism and Beyond

Institution:	International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Year/Block:	Year 1, Blocks 2 and 3
Course type:	Track-specific course
Assessment:	Assignment 1 Individual Presentations (25%)
	Assignment 2 Group Presentations (15%)
	Assignment 3 essay (60%)
ECTS:	10

Brief description (including learning outcomes): This course aims to situate current neo liberal market led reforms in public policy across a variety of governance systems in modern capitalist economies. This is a course about the rise, nature and evolution of neo liberalism and how it has become, not just as an idea, a preferred policy template or set of interests among many, but as the most influential agenda for the reshaping of the global order and the way in which political and economic life is organised. This course examines the ideological, economic and political reasons for this ascendancy and the institutional and political forces behind their existence.

The course is divided into three parts. Part I looks into the multiple ways in which the term has been defined ranging from orthodox approaches which deny the existence of neo liberalism, to many heterodox accounts in International Political economy (IPE) literature which treat it as a hegemonic discourse and practice. After situating these debates in their ontological and epistemological contours, this section will also analyse the policy metamorphosis of neo liberal reforms by tracing the shift from the structural adjustment/Washington Consensus era to the so called Post Washington Consensus era with its emphasis on institutional building, good governance policies and poverty reduction strategies. Part I concludes by asking whether neo liberalism is alive today or whether it has evolved in its nature.

Part II looks into the processes through which neo liberal reforms and policies have been appropriated and implemented, and the impact of these upon existing governance systems of social and political power. It draws on three specific cases revolving around the topics of i) higher education policies in Colombia, ii) political ecology, environment and conservation, iii) political economy of the internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Part III consists of four workshops where students will answer some specific questions about various debates that were covered throughout the course.

After completion of the course, students will have:

- Enhanced their knowledge of market led restructuring reform policies in contemporary capitalist economies;
- Situate the theories within the thematic settings of the course;
- Debated the various interpretations that are relevant to explaining the nature, rise and evolution of neo liberalism;
- Appraised their ability to analyse critically the claims made by scholars and other observers of neo liberal political, economic and social reform policies;
- Improved their academic skills in writing short and long essays.

Indicative readings

Brenner, N., J. Peck and N. Theodore (2010) 'Variegated Neoliberalization: Geographies, Modalities, Pathways', *Global Networks* 10(2): 182-222.

Harvey, D.W. (2005) *A Brief History of Neo Liberalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Robison, R. (ed.) (2006) *The Neo-Liberal Revolution.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Saad-Filho, A. and D. Johnston (eds) (2005) *NeoLiberalism: A Critical Reader.* London: Pluto Press.

Turner, R.S. (2008) *Neo-Liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.