

**Carleton University
Winter 2024
Institute of Political Economy**

**PECO 5504W (SOC1 5502/PSCI 5505)
*Precarious Work, Precarious Labour, Precarious Life***

Wednesday/ 08:35 am – 11:25 am

Location: 1524 Dunton Tower

Instructor: Maggie FitzGerald

Email: maggie.fitzgerald@carleton.ca

Office: Dunton Tower 1503

Office Hours: Monday, 10:00 am – 11:30 am, or by appointment

Course Description

This course begins with the notion of the precariat as a new class, defined as those who face chronic labour insecurity and thus have a unique relation to production, distribution, and the welfare state. We will examine the difference between precarious work and precarious labour, and consider challenges from the Global South that have argued that precarious labour only appears to be a ‘worse’ form of labour when compared to Western labour norms. In so doing, the class will together consider the ways in which precarious work and labour might (somewhat paradoxically) serve as well as disrupt capitalist relations of production. Lastly, the course will consider how the experience of precarious work and labour shapes precarity at the ontological level more broadly.

Course Objectives

By the completion of this course, students will be expected to:

1. Identify and explain key theoretical perspectives on precarity.
2. Critically reflect on the relationship between precarious work and labour and relations of power.
3. Enhance their academic skills of critical reading, research, writing, and presentations.

Required Course Materials

All course material will be available either through ARES, MacOdrum Library, or posted on Brightspace.

Office Hours and Emails

Office hours will be held on Mondays, 10-11:30 am. I will also often be available to meet after class. I try to answer emails within 24 hours, although this is not always possible. If you have a question about an assignment, it is therefore important that you email me at least 72 hours (and really, the earlier the better) before the assignment is due to ensure that I can respond in time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

	Topic	Dates	Special Notes
1	Class Introduction	Jan. 10 th	We will go through the syllabus, introduce the course, and sign up for class presentations.
2	Theorizing Precarity I	Jan. 17 th	<p>Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 2008. <i>The Communist Manifesto</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998. <i>Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time</i>. Cambridge: Polity Press. (Read the section: ‘Job Insecurity is Everywhere Now’).</p> <p>Masquelier, Charles. 2019. Bourdieu, Foucault and the Politics of Precarity. <i>Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory</i> 20, no. 2: 135-155.</p> <p>Kalleberg, Arne L. 2009. Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition. <i>American Sociological Review</i> 74: 1-22.</p>
3	Theorizing Precarity II	Jan. 24 th	<p>Standing, Guy. 2011. <i>The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class</i>. London: Bloomsbury Academic. (Read chapters 1, 2, and 3).</p> <p>Breman, Jan. 2013. A Bogus Concept? <i>New Left Review</i> 84: 130-138.</p> <p>Erik Olin Wright. 2016. Is the Precariat a Class? <i>Global Labour Journal</i> 7, no. 2: 123-135.</p> <p><i>Optional Readings:</i></p> <p>Standing, Guy. 2018. The Precariat: Today’s Transformative Class? <i>Great Transition Initiative</i> (October): 0-13.</p> <p>-----, 2014. Understanding the Precariat through Labour and Work. <i>Development and Change</i> 45, no. 5: 963-980.</p>
4	Theorizing Precarity III	Jan. 31 st	<p>Butler, Judith. 2011. For and Against Precarity. <i>Tidal: Occupy Theory, Occupy Strategy</i> 1: 12-13.</p> <p>-----, 2004. <i>Precarious Life</i>. London: Verso. (Read preface and chapter 5).</p> <p>Millar, Kathleen. 2017. Toward a Critical Politics of Precarity. <i>Sociology Compass</i> 11, no. 6: 1-11.</p>

			<p>Neilson, Brett and Ned Rossiter. 2008: Precarity as a Political Concept, or Fordism as Exception. <i>Theory, Culture & Society</i> 25, no. 7-8: 51-72.</p> <p>Feder Kittay, Eva. 2021. "Precarity, Precariousness, and Disability." In <i>Care Ethics in the Age of Precarity</i>, edited by Maurice Hammington and Michael Flower. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.</p>
5	Precarious Temporalities	Feb. 7 th	<p>Booth, William James. 1991. Economies of Time: On the Idea of Time in Marx's Political Economy. <i>Political Theory</i> 19, no. 1: 7-27.</p> <p>Marx, Karl. 1977. Capital Volume I. New York: Vintage Books. (Read chapter 10, Section 1: The Limits of the Working Day.)</p> <p>Millar, Kathleen. 2014. The Precarious Present: Wageless Labor and Disrupted Life in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 29, no. 1: 32-53.</p> <p>Barata, Andre and Renata Miguel Carmo. 2022. "The Experience of Precariousness as Vulnerable Time." In <i>Faces of Precarity: Critical Perspectives on Work, Subjectivities and Struggles</i>, edited by Joseph Choonara, Annalisa Murgia and Renato Miguel Carmo. Bristol: Bristol University Press.</p> <p>Standing, Guy. 2011. <i>The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class</i>. London: Bloomsbury Academic. (Read chapter 5).</p>
6	Precarity and Gender	Feb. 14 th	<p>Pulignano, Valeria and Glenn Morgan. 2022. "The Social Foundations of Precarious Work: The Role of Unpaid Labour in the Family." In <i>Faces of Precarity: Critical Perspectives on Work, Subjectivities and Struggles</i>, edited by Joseph Choonara, Annalisa Murgia and Renato Miguel Carmo. Bristol: Bristol University Press.</p> <p>Vosko, Leah F. and Nancy Zukewich. 2006. "Precarious by Choice? Gender and Self-employment" In <i>Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada</i>, edited by Leah F. Vosko. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.</p> <p>Easterbrook-Smith, Gwyn. 2023. OnlyFans as Gig-economy Work: A Nexus of Precarity and Stigma. <i>Porn Studies</i> 10,</p>

			no.3: 252-267. Cranford, C. J., L. Vosko and N. Zukewich. 2003. The Gender of Precarious Employment in Canada. <i>Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations</i> 58, no. 3: 454-482.
7	READING WEEK – NO CLASS Feb. 19th – 23rd		
8	Precarity and Coloniality	Feb. 28 th	Scully, Ben. 2016. Precarity North and South: A Southern Critique of Guy Standing. <i>Global Labour Journal</i> 7, no. 2: 160-173. Munck, Ronaldo. 2013. The Precariat: A View from the South. <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 34, no. 5: 747-762. Barchiesi, Franco. 2012a. Liberation of, Through, or From Work? Postcolonial Africa and the Problem of ‘Job Creation’ in the Global Crisis. <i>Interface: a journal for and about social movements</i> 4, no. 2: 230-253. ----- . 2012b. Precarity as Capture: A Conceptual Reconstruction and Critique of the Worker-Slave Analogy. <i>UniNomade</i> . http://www.uninomade.org/precarity-as-capture/ (accessed April 1, 2019).
9	Sites of Precarity	March 6 th	Baines, Donna, Ian Cunningham, and John Shields. 2017. Filling the Gaps: Unpaid (and Precarious) Work in the Nonprofit Social Services. <i>Critical Social Policy</i> 37, no. 4: 625-645. Arday, Jason. 2022. ‘More to Prove and More to Lose’: Race, Racism and Precarious Employment in Higher Education. <i>British Journal of Sociology of Education</i> 43, no 4: 513-533. Bryan, Catherine. 2019. Labour, Population, and Precarity: Temporary Foreign Workers Transition to Permanent Residency in Rural Manitoba. <i>Studies in Political Economy</i> 100, no. 3: 252-269. Hedberg, Charlotta. 2022. “Precarity and Migration: Thai Wild Berry Pickers in Sweden.” In <i>Faces of Precarity: Critical Perspectives on Work, Subjectivities and Struggles</i> , edited by Joseph Choonara, Annalisa Murgia and Renato Miguel Carmo. Bristol: Bristol University Press. Sotelo Valencia, Adrián, and Gil Felix. 2022.

			Superexploitation: Precarity and the Proletarian Condition through the Perspective of the Marxist Theory of Dependency. <i>Studies in Political Economy</i> 103, no. 1: 1-18,
10	Precarious Work: The Platform Economy	March 13 th	<p>Piasna, Agnieszka. 2022. "Precariousness in the Platform Economy." In <i>Faces of Precarity: Critical Perspectives on Work, Subjectivities and Struggles</i>, edited by Joseph Choonara, Annalisa Murgia and Renato Miguel Carmo. Bristol: Bristol University Press.</p> <p>Gerber, Christine. 2022. Gender and Precarity in Platform Work: Old Inequalities in the New World of Work. <i>New Technology, Work and Employment</i> 37, no. 2: 206-230.</p> <p>Anwar, M. A., and M. Graham. 2021. Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Freedom, Flexibility, Precarity and Vulnerability in the Gig Economy in Africa. <i>Competition & Change</i> 25, no. 2: 237-258.</p> <p>Schor, J.B., W. Attwood-Charles, M. Cansoy, et al. 2020. Dependence and Precarity in the Platform Economy. <i>Theory and Society</i> 49: 833–861.</p>
11	Precarious Organizing	March 20 th	<p>Hardy, Jane. 2022. "Organizing and Self-Organized Precarious Workers: The Experience of Britain." In <i>Faces of Precarity: Critical Perspectives on Work, Subjectivities and Struggles</i>, edited by Joseph Choonara, Annalisa Murgia and Renato Miguel Carmo. Bristol: Bristol University Press.</p> <p>Casas-Cortés, Maribel. 2014. A Genealogy of Precarity: A Toolbox for Rearticulating Fragmented Social Realities In and Out of the Workplace. <i>Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society</i> 26, no. 2: 206-226.</p> <p>Schenk, Chris. 2006. "Union Renewal and Precarious Employment: A Case Study of Hotel Workers." In <i>Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada</i>, edited by Leah F. Vosko. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.</p> <p>Cynthia J. Cranford, Tania Das Gupta, Deena Ladd, and Leah F. Vosko. 2006. "Thinking through Community Unionism." In <i>Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada</i>, edited by Leah F. Vosko. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.</p>

12	Precarity as Resistance	March 27 th	<p>Goldín, Liliana. 2011. Labour Turnover among Maquiladora Workers of Highland Guatemala: Resistance and Semiproletarianization in Global Capitalism. <i>Latin American Research Review</i> 46, no. 3: 133-156.</p> <p>Zhan, Shaohua, and Lingli Huang. 2012. Rural Roots of Current Migrant Labor Shortage in China: Development and Labor Empowerment in a Situation of Incomplete Proletarianization. <i>Studies in Comparative International Development</i> 48, no. 1: 81-111.</p> <p>FitzGerald, Maggie. 2021. “Precarious Political Ontologies and the Ethics of Care.” In <i>Care Ethics in the Age of Precarity</i>, edited by Maurice Hammington and Michael Flower. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.</p> <p>Leget, Carlo. 2021. “Deliberate Precarity? On the Relation between Care Ethics, Voluntary Precarity, and Voluntary Simplicity.” In <i>Care Ethics in the Age of Precarity</i>, edited by Maurice Hammington and Michael Flower. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.</p>
13		April 3 rd	<p>Class Cancelled – Professor Away</p> <p>We will hold individual meetings on April 2nd to discuss your final papers and any other course related questions.</p>

Schedule subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

Course Evaluation

Class Participation	15%
Class Presentation	20%
Critical Review Essay	20%
Final Paper Outline	15%
Final Paper	30%
Total	100%

Class Participation (15%): Due date: Ongoing

Students are expected to attend all classes, read the assigned texts prior to class meetings, and participate actively and regularly in class discussions. Class participation will be evaluated based on the quality and quantity of contributions to class discussions, with particular emphasis on quality. Quality contributions to class discussions should demonstrate that you can analytically and critically engage with the themes, ideas, issues, and (dis)connections between the readings.

Class Presentation (20%): Due date: To be determined

Each student will be responsible for beginning a seminar with a class presentation. Specifically, each student must give one in-class presentation of about 20 minutes

introducing and responding to the required readings (and optionally, recommended readings) for a particular class. You will sign up for the date of your presentation in the first class. Note that the class presentation should not simply summarize the readings. Instead, the class presentation should

(a) discuss how the readings relate to each other (as well as to other themes discussed in the course);

(b) present analytical and critical reflections on individual readings or the general approaches under discussion; and

(c) raise questions about the readings for class discussion. It is essential that your presentation is not a mere summary of the readings, as it is expected that all students will have read the material prior to the class.

I am happy to meet with you before your presentation to help you plan.

Critical Review Essay (20%): Due date: To be determined

Each student must write one critical review essay (5 pages double spaced plus bibliography). The review essay must provide a critical analysis and assessment of the assigned readings for a week of your choice. Your review essay must provide a coherent argument, including a thesis statement, and must engage with at least three of the readings for the chosen week. You may use either required or recommended readings; you may not use any outside sources. The purpose of the critical review essay is to reflect exclusively on the readings for a given week. You cannot write your critical review essay for the same week as your class presentation. The review essay is due, in hard copy, at the beginning of the class on the day your chosen readings will be discussed.

Resubmission Option:

Each student will have the option to revise and resubmit their critical review essay. You have until the last day of classes (April 10th) to submit your revised essay. Please submit your revised essays directly to me (hard copy); please also include the original essay so that I can assess how you've responded to the feedback.

One of the most important writing skills you can develop involves receiving feedback, assessing and considering the feedback, and then re-working your paper in light of the concerns raised by the reviewer/evaluator. My hope is that this option gives you a chance to develop these important skills, which will serve you well in a number of endeavors (both academic and professional).

In general, if you wish to resubmit the essay, the idea is to take my feedback and comments, and then rework your essay to strengthen it based on any issues I raised. I am happy to talk with you if you would like to pursue this option and need some help getting going. And, of course, this is completely optional - if you are happy with your work, or simply don't have time to revisit, that's entirely alright. Furthermore, no one will be penalized for taking this option (that is, if by some chance your grade on your revised essay is lower than the original, I will keep the original grade. More simply, I will always keep the higher grade.)

Final Paper Outline (15%): Due date: February 28th

Each student must submit a final paper outline (no longer than 1 page single spaced),

including a tentative final paper title, thesis statement, and paragraph or two about the proposed paper topic. Additionally, a short bibliography may be included. This will allow me to provide feedback on your chosen topic, and to ensure that your proposed final project aligns with the course themes and objectives. This is due at the beginning of class, in hard copy format, on February 28th.

Final Paper (30%): Due date: April 10th

You are required to write a final paper, 20 pages double spaced, on a topic of your choice related to the course themes. It may be a theoretical discussion or applied analysis. The paper must be emailed to me by 11:59 pm on Wednesday, April 10th.

Each student will also meet with the professor one-on-one to discuss their final paper on April 2nd. This meeting is not graded but is rather meant as a ‘check in’ to support you as you complete your final paper.

ADDITIONAL POLICY INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Student Mental Health

As a university student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

• **Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

• **Off Campus Resources:**

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) as soon as possible, and normally no later than 24 hours after the submission deadline for course deliverables. Students should also consult the [Course Outline Information on Academic Accommodations](#) for more information. Detailed information about the procedure for requesting academic consideration can be found [here](#).

Pregnancy and Family-Status Related Accommodation: Please write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first few weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details about the accommodation policy, visit the Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) website.

Religious obligation: Please write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the [Ventus Student Portal](#) at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the [University Academic Calendars](#). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Sexual Violence Policy

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Plagiarism

Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

***** Artificial intelligence text generator tools (also known as large language models) are not permitted to be used in any assessments for this course. Any use of such tools will be considered academic misconduct in this course.*****

More information on the University’s Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes,

labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.