

Carleton University
Winter 2020
<https://carleton.ca/polisci/>

PECO 5502W/PSCI 5502W/SOCI 5505
The Future of Work in Bits and Bytes: Subjects, Time, and Surveillance
Thursday 17:35-20:25
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:45pm – 5:50 pm

Course Description and Objectives:

“The old world is dying, and the new world is struggling to be born: now is the time of monsters”
-Antonio Gramsci

Gramsci’s quote could appear to loom large over us. The ecological world is certainly in a period of significant rupture and discontinuity, and what habitat that will remain fit for human life is, sadly, an open question. The geopolitical order is undergoing a significant transition as new economic center of power put former colonial powers increasingly on the periphery. It is easy to feel there are few solid pieces of ground left from which to get our bearings.

This feeling is particularly acute when we turn our attention to the social codes and economic relations that had governed the patterns, expectations and identities of working lives of our parents and grandparents. The old economy and its attendant worldviews are in the last throes of disintegration.

We are now in a game of coining placeholders to name and define the social and economic relations that are now coming into shape: the gig economy, platform capitalism, the access economy, the fourth industrial revolution, are but a few. Debates are now emerging on whether this is the end of capitalism (you know for real this time...), or perhaps merely capitalism unleashed, at last realized in its truest form least encumbered by previous social and political limitations. We ask these questions because as scholars, activists and individuals, we want to know what is coming. Any stab at an answer though demands that we put the old and new into conversation. After-all, it is by historical engagement that we may better appreciate what is sui generis to the social and economic relations of our present state, and what in fact are continuations, albeit modified, of previous social forms.

In this seminar, students will engage with three flashpoints: old and current debates on automation, work-time in different periods of production, and the historical and present relationship among capitalism, surveillance, and data production. Engaging with these

flashpoints should help us begin to answer some of these questions and gain insight into emerging forces of change and opportunities of where new social, economic and political practices are at their weakest. Through these engagements, the course will offer students greater insight into the application of sociological theory to contemporary issues, as well as a firmer grasp of the future political economy of work.

Required Texts:

Richard Sennett, *Corrosion of Character*, (New York-London: W.W. Norton 1999)

Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: Frontiers: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, (Great Britain, profile books, 2019)

(In the aim of economic inclusiveness, this course is designed to involve minimal needs to purchase books. All readings beyond these primary texts are either online or will be provided as photocopies.)

Grade Distribution

The breakdown of grading is as follows:

Critical Reviews	30% of your total mark (20 marks per essay)
Final Paper	50% of your total mark (10 marks on proposal opt.)
Participation	<u>20% of your total mark (20 marks)</u>

Explanatory Notes on Assignments

Critical Reviews

You will be asked to write one critical review paper of 2500 words. I would like you to do something rather straightforward. I want you to plan an engagement with different elements of the task-based economy and to then critically appraise this experience against Richard Sennett's text "The Corrosion of Character." What does the experience tell you about Sennett's insights on the shift in work to flexible patterns, in what ways does the task work presume or configure new economic subjects? How do these subjects compare against Sennett's analysis? What is the new configuration of work-time in the task-based economy? Possible task-based engagements include but are not limited to, hiring an Uber, task-rabbit, either completing or requesting a request on the freelance website, Fiverr, www.fiverr.com, or engaging as a mechanical Turk on Amazon's platform.

The options are relatively open but make sure you select a task that challenges themes of work-time, surveillance, precarity, and the structure of work. The task you select should not make you feel physically unsafe (i.e. Uber), but it may make you socially uncomfortable and that uncomfortableness is grounds for exploration.

Final Paper

The final paper is worth 50% of your grade. It is a research paper. You may elect to convert 10% of the total mark of the paper into a research paper proposal, which I will mark and

provide feedback and return at our last class. I would like you to take on any theme from the course, but to do so through either of these two potential analytical approaches. 1). A historical comparison, where you examine some element of current political economy of work and compare it against a historical case to explore continuities and divergences. 2). An extrapolation of the current social practices into a future state. In short, try to provide a sketch on how the future might look like if certain social and economic practices were to intensify, become more global across the social field, or accelerate. In this case, you will be graded on your ability to integrate social theory and insights from this course to support your analysis.

Participation

Graduate seminars depend heavily on attending class regularly and engaging with your fellow colleagues on readings, and sharing ideas. I want to encourage this approach for this class. However, I also recognize that there are all kinds of dynamics that make some more comfortable to share ideas than others, and for that matter a high quantity of interventions should not be valued more high quality thoughts and insights shared that come less frequently. To this end, I would like to try and evaluate participation in two ways:

1). 12% of your participation will come from your role in leading a weekly discussion. This involves you coming to class a brief 10-minute presentation on the readings with a few questions you would like to pose to the class for discussion.

The remaining 8% of your attendance will be evaluated on your engagement in the classroom. To be clear, I am trying to evaluate these both on your insight into the readings, but also your engagement with others in the class. In particular, do you ask your colleagues questions with intent for them to clarify and expand their thinking, support their insights, and engage one another respectfully when you disagree? When I was a graduate student, there was a tendency to try prove to the professor that you have a better answer than your colleagues and this makes for a rather abysmal game of self-comparison.

However, the reason we come together in this seminar every week should ultimately be to work together to try to unpack some of the rather seismic social and economic shifts that are taking place. We will get further on these matters if we genuinely try to support one another's inquiries than if we simply expend time trying to prove to one another that we deserve to be here.

While I will do my utmost to be observant of this and provide fair marks according to these criteria, I recognize that much of this isn't just my perception of how you work together but you perceive we work together over the coming weeks. **For this reason, I will use a mixed method approach of my own evaluation of your participation and blind assessments from your peers to come up with the final mark of the 8%.** We can discuss how this will operate more in our first class.

Also, in terms of regular attendance, I am under no illusion that our evening course is the

only thing going in your life, and life happens: people get dumped, partners get sick, and sometimes, especially in our long winters, people find themselves laid low by depression and anxiety. All these things can take you away from our weekly meetings.

So, I will take attendance, but I will not penalize you for missing class. If you are away for two consecutive seminars without providing notification, you can expect me to follow-up.

Policy for Late Assignments:

I provide deadlines on assignments because I think we don't have them we tend to put things off and put things off and then the easy relaxed, no worries approach to receiving your work because a source of considerable stress and anxiety. I do provide extensions, because, as mentioned, I recognize things happen; however, you need to get in touch with me and ask for an extension and to do so before the paper is actually due. If you do not do this and provide no explanation, I will deduct 3% per a day.

Tentative Lecture Outline and Reading List

Week of January 6th: Guiding Threads and Introduction

Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his mission to the United States of America, July 2018, pp. 1-20

Kristy Milland, "From Bottom to Top: How Amazon Mechanical Turk disrupts employment as a whole" Brookfield Institute, March 4th 2019, <https://brookfieldinstitute.ca/commentary/from-bottom-to-top-how-amazon-mechanical-turk-disrupts-employment-as-a-whole/>

The Future of work Five Game Changers, Policy Horizons, June 2019. Government of Canada publications, <https://horizons.gc.ca/en/2019/06/20/the-future-of-work-five-game-changers/>

Optional: Aaron Henry, 2017, "A Generation of Scrappers" Montreal Review, January 2017, <http://www.themontrealreview.com/2009/A-Generation-of-Scrappers.php>

Week of January 13th: Historical Origins of Automation and Crisis

Marx, Karl, Grundrisse, 1973 ed. Marin Nicolaus, 690-711

Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, selections.

Ricardo, David, Principles, Third Edition, "On Machinery"

Week January 20th: Vanguard Responses to Post-Fordist Automation

Tessa-Morris Suzuki, "Robots and Capitalism" New Left Review, 1984, 1/147: 109-121

Donna Haraway, "The Cyborg Manifesto" in *Simians, Cyborgs, Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free, 1991)

Week January 27th: Reframing the Problem of Automation and Work

Hughes, Carl, Alan Southern, 2019, "The world of work and the crisis of capitalism: Marx and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, *Journal of Classical Sociology*" in *Journal of Classical Sociology*, vol. 19, issue 1, pp. 59-71

Wolfgang Streeck, "How Will Capitalism End," *New Left Review*, 2014. pp. 35-64

Robinson, William, Yousef Baker, 2019, *Savage inequalities: Capitalist Crisis and Surplus Humanity*, in *International Critical Thought*, vol. 9 issue 3 pp. 376-393

The Future of work Five Game Changers, *Policy Horizons*, June 2019. Government of Canada publications, <https://horizons.gc.ca/en/2019/06/20/the-future-of-work-five-game-changers/>

Week February 3rd: Work-Time in Industrial Capitalism

E.P. Thompson, 1967, *Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism*, in *Past and Present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 56-97

Paul Glennie, Nigel Thrift, 1996, "Reworking E.P Thompson's Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism, in *Time and Society* volume 5, issue 3: pp. 275-299

Week February 10th: New Time Regimes and their Subjects

Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character*, parts 1-4

Week February 17th: No Classes

Week February 24th: New Time Regimes and Their Subjects continued.

Richard Sennett, *Corrosion of Character*, parts 5-8

Optional: Anne Peterson, "How Millennials Became the Burnout Generation" in *Buzz Feed* January 5th 2019, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/annehelenpetersen/millennials-burnout-generation-debt-work>

Week March 2nd: From Resumes to Ratings

For this week, please the episode "Nose Dive," Season 3, episode 1, before attending class. We will revisit the episode during class but our re-examination in class will be guided by questions and insights you bring to class from your initial viewing.

Critical Review Due at the Start of Class

Week March 9th: Resumes to Ratings, Proto-forms of digital states?

Rachel Botsman, “Big Data Meets Big Brother as China Moves to Rate its Citizens” in *Wired*.

Genia Kostka, 2019, “China’s social credit systems and public opinion: explaining high levels of approval in New Media and Society, vol. 21 issue 7, pp. 1565-1593

Leah Scolere, Urszula Pruchniew, Brooke Erin Duffy, 2018, *Constructing Platform Specific-Self Brand: The Labor of Social Media Promotion*

Week March 16: Data, Ratings and the Historical Modification of Surveillance?

Jeremy Bentham, “The Panopticon or Inspection House” in *The Panopticon Writings* ed. Miran Bozovic. London: Verso, 1995) p. 29-95

Sir William Petty, “Writings on The Wall of London” in *A General Police System: Political Economy and Enlightenment*, ed. George Rigakos, John L McMullan, Gulden Ozcan, (Red Quill Books: Ottawa, 2009) pp. 33-51

Rigakos, George, Richard Hadden, 2001, “Crime, Capitalism and the Risk Society: Towards the Same Olde Modernity” in *Theoretical Criminology*, vol. 5 (1) pp. 61-84

Week March 23rd: Data, Ratings and the Historical Modification of Surveillance?

Shoshana Zuboff, 2019, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for the Future at the Frontier of Power –read Part I*

***Research paper proposals due*

Week March 30th:

Shoshana Zuboff, 2019, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for the Future at the Frontier of Power, read, Part II, and “Utopia of Certainty in Part III*

April 25: Final Papers Due

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.”

Academic Integrity

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an

offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Learning and working environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the Student Ombuds Office: (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at <https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110> .

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by [Student Conduct and Accountability](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general. If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#) .

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Academic Accommodations

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

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 its 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: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

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 must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;

- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

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.

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 and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty 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

Approval of final grades

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.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University

information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.

Carleton Political Science Society

"The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/> and our website <https://carletonpss.com/>, or stop by our office in Loeb D688!"

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.