

PECO 5504 W / PSCI 5915 X / SOCI 5806 W/ ANTH 5708 S

Labor, Social Difference, and Subjectivity

Institute of Political Economy
Carleton University
Winter 2022

Instructor: Deniz Duruiz

E-mail: deniz.duruiz@cunet.carleton.ca

Office Hours: by appointment through [Calendy link here](#)

Office location: Dunton Tower, 15th floor, Room 1503

Zoom link for online office hours: [link](#)

Seminar meetings: Friday 2.35- 5.25 PM

In person seminar location: 516 Southam Hall

Zoom link for seminar: [link](#)

Course Description:

Jason Read reminds us that what set Marx apart from prior political economists was his emphasis on subjectivity (Read 2003). According to Marx, what we do all day every day determines our relationship to ourselves, the world around us, and to humanity at large. Although his views on the particularities of labor, consciousness, and subjectivity have been reinterpreted, nuanced, amended, and challenged, it is undeniable that who we are is intimately linked with the work we do. Drawing on critical theory, social history and ethnography, we will ask: How does our background (family, class, race, gender, education) affect the work we do? How does the everyday activity of labor differentially inform our present (our bodies, health, success, happiness, respectability) and our future (prospects of class mobility, credit line, property ownership, social reproduction), and our individual and collective sense of being? What are the hierarchies, inequalities, and forms of oppression and exploitation generated by the capitalist organization of labor? How do the legacies of colonialism, slavery, and patriarchy survive in those inequalities? How did the meaning and the activity of work change over two centuries of capitalism? Which activities count as work? And can we think of a future without work?

The course will start with Adam Smith's and Marx's writings on labor both as a concept of political economy and an everyday activity. Each week, pairing critical theory with social history and/or labor ethnographies, we will explore the topics of modernity and working class, slave labor, indigenous labor/land theft, women's labor, migrant labor, labor in racial capitalism, education and labor, unemployment and homelessness, white-collar work in finance and culture industry, and refusal of work. Exploring these issues theoretically as well as through historical and ethnographic examples, students will question how social difference factors into the relationship between labor and subjectivity. In doing so, the students will gain an understanding of labor in relation not only to the production of wealth but also to the production of subjectivities distinguished along the lines of race, gender, class, citizenship, and alternative forms of social belonging.

Course Format:

This course was designed to be an in-person seminar but due to recent COVID restrictions in Ontario the first three weeks of the class will be held online. I hope that we will switch to in person *as soon as it is safe* to do so. By my safety standards, this means that we all have to wear masks while we are in the seminar room even if at some point during the semester not wearing masks indoors is allowed by federal or state regulations. So, students should be prepared for both online and in-person formats. Whether it is in-person or online, the seminar will be synchronous so you should block all three hours on your calendar.

Course Requirements:

Students should attend each scheduled meeting of the seminar having done the reading for the week, and participate in the discussion. Additionally, you will write five 500-750 word-long response papers with reference to the week's readings. Students are also expected to write a final paper proposal, which is a paragraph-long outline of what you are planning to write in your final paper and cite at least two readings from the course and at least two outside sources that you plan to use for your final paper. I will give written feedback to final paper proposals

Grading:

5 response papers	35%
Attendance and participation	30%
Final paper proposal	5%
Final Paper	30%

I will grade everything out of 100 and convert the grades to a letter grade at the end of the course. I will use the conversion table suggested by Carleton University Calendar

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			

However, note that you cannot pass this course *if you do not turn in at least 2 out of 5 response papers and the Final Paper*. At the graduate level, any grade below a B- is considered unsatisfactory, if your grade for any assignment is below 70, you should make an appointment with me to talk about how to improve your grades.

1) Response Papers:

Reading response papers should reflect on the readings/course material of the week ahead. The response paper should discuss the readings of the week and pose one or two questions that you would like to discuss in the seminar. By definition, response papers should be handed in *before* the seminar because I want to read your reaction to the readings before I present my analyses and interpretation of the readings and we discuss them all together in class. You should write at least two response papers out of the four weeks before the winter break (until Feb 18) and three response papers out of six weeks after the winter break. **Response papers should be uploaded**

to Brightspace until 9 PM on Thursday (the day *before the seminar*). For example, for Week 2, the seminar is on Friday Jan 22, response papers are due Thursday, Jan 21st at 9 PM. If you have any problem uploading your paper, send it to me by email.

Length: 1,5-2 pages, double space, 12 pt (500-750 words)

A good response paper should (not necessarily in the following order):

- 1) Outline the **main argument(s)** of the reading.

This is not an argument: I think Marx's analysis of the commodity is brilliant.

This is an argument: According to Marx, commodity is the elementary form of capitalist production.

- 2) Make a comparative conceptual argument. If there are two theoretical texts or two related concepts within a text, provide the **definition of the main concepts** that the text introduces, and **the relationship between those concepts**.

The wrong way to do it → In this paper I will compare and contrast Smith's and Marx's approach to division of labour. Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was first published in 1776 and he argues that nations get rich due to advancements in division of labour. Marx's *Capital* was published in 1867 and he argues that division of labour eventually leads to commodity production.

(This example gives dates but it does not explain why the dates matter. It also does not explain the relationship between the two authors' understandings of the division of labour)

A good argument built on two related concepts →

The following example provides the definition for two concepts: 1) commodity, 2) socially necessary labor time. It also explains the relationship between them.

Marx defines the commodity as follows: "The commodity is, first of all, an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind" (Marx 1977, 125). However, the usefulness of a commodity is a subjective measure, therefore it cannot be used to compare two commodities and make them exchangeable in the market. Marx argues that what makes commodities comparable is the socially necessary labor time that is spent for their production. Socially necessary labor time means the average labor time required in a particular society to produce a certain article.

- 3) Critically respond to the reading. "Critical" does not mean "tear it apart and find the weaknesses in the reading". "Respond" does not mean I want to know how the reading made you feel or whether your personal experience matches with the argument of the text. It means questioning the conceptual, analytical, empirical, textual, and literary

contributions of the text to a general body of literature or to a particular debate. Ask yourself:

- a. What are the general issues the text raises? Who/what is the text arguing against? What are the new ways of thinking it offers to its readers?
- b. What did I learn by reading this text? Which assumptions did it make me rethink? What did it allow me to see that I would not have realized otherwise?
- c. What insights does this text offer when I read it together with the other texts assigned for this class?

You do not have to (and probably should not try to) do all of these things in one response paper but make sure you do 1 (main argument) in all response papers and at least one of the 2, 3a, 3b or 3c.

Late Policy:

Late response papers will be penalized by 7% grade reduction for the first day and 5% reduction for every following date. The first day has a higher penalty than the other days because it means that you did not hand in your response paper *before* we discussed the readings in class, which beats the purpose of response paper.

The aim of this policy is to get you in the habit of setting realistic goals for a given writing project, planning ahead, managing your time wisely, and handing in work on time.

2) Attendance and Participation:

You will receive 2 points immediately after each seminar (the first week does not count, attendance is taken for 11 weeks) and the remaining 8 points at the end of the seminar.

You get 1 point for attending the seminar and 1 point for contributing to the discussion with comments showing that you read and understood the texts assigned in the seminar. So, 22 out of 30 points of attendance and participation are determined immediately after each seminar. This is the baseline. The remaining 8 points are about the overall *quality* of your contribution to the seminar. Are you making an original contribution? Did you give specific examples from the text? Did you raise questions that brought a new perspective to the discussion in the seminar? Did the depth of your engagement with the texts improve over time? These overall contribution points will be determined at the end of the seminar.

3) Final Paper Proposal:

This is your chance to get feedback on your final paper idea so the more you provide, the more feedback I can give you.

Your final paper proposal should include the following:

- A brief description of your project
- The main questions you will ask/issues you will address.
- The resources you will use (specific book, public social media post, blog post, online forum, newspaper article, ...etc.)
- The method(s) of presentation you will use (e.g. academic paper, op-ed, podcast episode, vlog post...etc.)

If you are planning to use audiovisual material, make sure you discuss in detail what exactly you are planning to do with it.

4) Final Paper

Your final paper (20-25 pages, 12 pt., double-spaced) should address one or more of the themes of the course, directly refer to the readings and outside sources, and make an original argument. You are also encouraged to sign up for office hours and discuss your final paper with me. You should use one of the major citational styles for your final paper (ASA, APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard...etc.) and consistently use the same style to organize your in-text citations, references, footnotes, and endnotes. Check their [latest guidelines through MacOdrum Library's website](#).

Late final papers will be penalized by 5% grade reduction for each day after the deadline. The last date I will accept late final papers is May 5th.

Seminar Deadlines

All deadlines are on Thursdays at 9 PM

Latest deadline for Response paper #1	Feb 10
Latest deadline for Response paper #2	Feb 17
WINTER BREAK	Feb 21-25
Latest deadline for Response paper #3	March 24
Latest deadline for Response paper #4	March 31
Latest deadline for Response paper #5	April 7
Final Paper Proposal	March 31
Final Paper	April 28

Requests for Academic Accommodations

If you are unable to complete an assignment on time due to an illness, family emergency or other extenuating circumstances, **get in touch with me as soon as possible and ask for an extension. Do**

not wait until the last minute to ask for an extension. But also, do not shy away from asking for an extension. The sooner you get in touch with me, the sooner we can come up with a plan for you to catch up with no penalties.

Accommodations during COVID:

Due to COVID, instructors will not request or require a doctor's note when students seek accommodation for missed term work or exams due to illness. Instead, students will be asked to complete the self-declaration form available here: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/self-declaration.pdf>

Academic Regulations and Accommodations

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, your graduate student handbook, and the regulations and procedures of the Faculty of Public Affairs.

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, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term.

For Religious Obligations:

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: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Pregnancy:

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: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For 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: www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

For Extra-curricular 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>

Plagiarism

Using someone else's ideas, work, and written or spoken phrasing and presenting it as one's own is a violation of academic integrity known as plagiarism. However, human knowledge is cumulative, and we all have to build on the ideas of others in order to develop our own ideas.

Of course, you should not wittingly "cheat", which means "stealing" someone else's ideas, phrasings or the results of their research and present it as your own. But in many cases, plagiarism occurs because the student does not pay attention to what to cite as someone else's idea.

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy (See <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>). The Policy is strictly enforced and is binding on all students. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Students who infringe the Policy may be subject to one of several penalties.

What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including but not limited to: expulsion; suspension from all studies at Carleton; suspension from full-time studies; and/or a reprimand; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; academic probation; award of an FNS, Fail, or an ABS.

What are the Procedures?

1. All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FPA and to Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and/or departmental chairs.
2. The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism.
3. The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

Course Readings:

Week 1: Introduction to class (Jan 14)

We will review the syllabus and discuss assignments. We will watch selections from Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), Mark J. Francis and Nick Francis's *Black Gold* (2006), and Shannon Walsh's *The Gig Is Up* (2021) (if I can figure out the technical side of things) and start discussing what "work" means.

Read: Gargi Bhattacharya – ["We, the heartbroken"](#)

Week 2: Foundations I (Jan 21)

Adam Smith *The Wealth of Nations* -book I,
ch. I "Of the Division of Labour";
ch. II "Of the Principle which gives Occasion to the Division of Labour";
Ch. III "That the Division of Labour is limited by the Extent of the Market" pp.16-41

Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, Ch 1 The Commodity
"The Two Factors of the Commodity: Use-Value and Value (Substance of Value, Magnitude of Value)"
"The Dual Character of the Labour Embodied in Commodities" pp. 125-137
"The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret" 163-177

Karl Marx – "Estranged Labor" *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1944* pp.69-84

Suggested reading:

Zandy, J., 2004. *Hands: Physical Labor, Class, and Cultural Work*. Rutgers University Press.

Week 3: Foundations II (Jan 28)

Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, part VIII,
ch. 26 "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation";
ch. 27 "The Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land";
ch. 28 "Bloody Legislation Against the Expropriated";
ch. 29 "The Genesis of the Capitalist Farmer" Pp. 873-908

ch. 31 "The Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist";
ch. 32 "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation" pp. 914-930

Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 - Appendix I, The Formal Subsumption of Labor Under Capital, The Real Subsumption of Labor Under Capital, *Capital*, pp. 1019-1038

Jason Read – *The Micro-Politics of Capital: Marx and the Prehistory of the Present*
Ch 2: What Is Living and What Is Dead In the Philosophy of Karl Marx: Politics and Ontology of Living Labor, pp. 61-102

Suggested reading:

Jason Read – *The Micro-Politics of Capital: Marx and the Prehistory of the Present*
Ch 3: “The Real Subsumption of Subjectivity by Capital” pp.102-150

Week 4: Slave Labor and its Aftermath (Feb 4)

Jacqueline Jones – *Labor of Sorrow Labor of Love: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (Introduction and Chapter 1) pp.1-42

Angela Davis – *Women, Race, and Class* “The Legacy of Slavery: Standards for a New Womanhood” (selections)

Audre Lorde – “The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House”

Cedric Robinson *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*
Ch 5 “The Atlantic Slave Trade and African Labor” in *Black Marxism* pp.101-120

Week 5: The Making of the Working Class and Racial Capitalism (Feb 11)

E.P. Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (Preface pp. 9-14, Ch 6 Exploitation + Ch 7 Field Labourers pp. 189-234)

Cedric Robinson *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* Introduction and Chapter 1: Racial Capitalism pp. 1-29

Gargi Bhattacharyya - *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*. Rowman & Littlefield. (selections)

Week 6: Women’s Labor and Class (Feb 18)

Marx - Appendix I, “Productive and Unproductive Labour”, *Capital*, pp. 1038-1049

David Harvie, 2005. “All Labour Produces Value for Capital and We All Struggle against Value.”

Sylvia Federici – *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*
Ch 2-“The Accumulation of Labor and the Degradation of Women: Constructing “Difference” in the “Transition to Capitalism” pp.61-132

Fraser, N., 2017. 7. Behind Marx’s Hidden Abode: For an Expanded Conception of Capitalism. In *Critical Theory in Critical Times* (pp. 141-159). Columbia University Press.

Suggested reading:

Secombe, W., 1974. “The Housewife and her Labour under Capitalism”

Tadiar, N.X.M., 1997. Domestic Bodies of the Philippines. *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, pp.153-191.

Steedman, C., 1987. *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives*. Rutgers University Press.

Hochschild, A. and Machung, A., 2012. *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*. Penguin. (selections)

Week 7: Winter Break (Feb 25)

Week 8: Coloniality of Power, Race, and Indigenous Labor (Mar 4)

Quijano, A., 2000. Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), pp.215-232.

Cole Harris - "How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire"

Sherry Farrell Racette - "Nimble Fingers and Strong Backs: First Nations and Métis Women in Fur Trade and Rural Economies" in *Indigenous Women and Work: From Labor to Activism* edited by Carol Williams pp. 148-162

John Lutz, *Makuk: A New History of Aboriginal–White Relations* (selections)

Week 9: "Coloniality" of Migrant Labor (Mar 11)

Mezzadra, Sandro, and Brett Neilson. *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*. Duke University Press, 2013

Introduction: Proliferation of Borders - pp. 1-27

Chapter 5 - In the Space of Temporal Borders - pp. 131-166

Gutierrez-Rodriguez, E., 2014, September. Domestic Work–Affective Labor: On Feminization and the Coloniality of Labor. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 46, pp. 45-53). Pergamon.

Film: "[Migrant Dreams](#)" directed by Min Sook Lee (2016)

Synopsis: A group of migrant farm workers dare to resist the systemic oppression and exploitation from their brokers, employers and Canadian government in small-town Ontario.

Week 10: "Illegality" of Migrant Labor (Mar 18)

Andersson, R., 2014. *Illegality, Inc.: Clandestine Migration and the Business of Bordering Europe*. Univ of California Press. (selections)

De Genova, N., 2005. *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago*. Duke University Press. (selections)

Week 11 – Immaterial Labor (Mar 25)

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2004. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Press. (selections)

Virno, P., 2003. *A Grammar of the Multitude*. London: Semiotext (e). (selections)

Yanagisako, S., 2012. Immaterial and Industrial Labor: On false binaries in Hardt and Negri's trilogy. *Focaal*, 2012(64), pp.16-23.

Sandoval, M., 2018. From Passionate Labour to Compassionate Work: Cultural Co-ops, Do What You Love and Social Change. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 21(2), pp.113-129.

Suggested reading:

Lazzarato, Maurizio. "From capital-labour to capital-life." *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization* 4, no. 3 (2004): 187-208.

Tokumitsu, M., 2015. *Do What You Love: And Other Lies about Success & Happiness*. Simon and Schuster. "Introduction"

Week 12: Unemployment and Homelessness (Apr 1)

Bruce O'Neill - *The Space of Boredom: Homelessness in the Slowing Global Order* (Introduction pp. 1-18 and Chapter 4 Bored to Death pp. 96-121)

Jesse Thistle - *From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way* (selections)

Week 13: Postwork Imaginaries (Apr 8)

Berardi, F., 2009. *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*. (selections)

Weeks, K., 2011. *The Problem with work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Duke University Press. (selections)