

# **JPG1809H**

## **Spaces of work: value, identity, agency, justice**

Dr. Michelle Buckley

Fall 2021

Class: Mondays, 1-4pm (SS5017A)

Office hours: (by appointment)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will be a chance for students to engage with, and appreciate, a breadth of perspectives on work and labour emanating from Marxist, feminist, critical race, and postcolonial traditions of thought. A key intention of this course is to prompt students to examine what forms of work – and also *whose* work – has been taken into account in geographical scholarship and to explore a number of prominent debates concerning labour, work and employment within and outside of geography over the last three decades. In doing so, we will engage with political economy texts on the social relations of labour under capitalism, and texts within geography, sociology and the social sciences on work, labour, place and space. We will examine a number of broad economic and cultural shifts in the nature of contemporary work and employment such as the feminization of labour markets and service sector work, neoliberalization and the growth of non-standard employment relations. At the same time, students will be prompted to consider critiques of some of these transformational narratives to probe the colonial, hetero-patriarchal, capitalist continuities shaping the contours of contemporary work and its regulation. In this sense this is not an exhaustive course on labour and work in geography, but rather a series of discrete introductions to key scholarly arguments about work and the geo-historical formations and social relations that undergird it. Readings and themes are tied together by four overarching themes that run through the course: *value*, *identity*, *agency* and *justice*.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The course will give students an opportunity to:

1. Develop a breadth of knowledge in the diversity of conceptualizations of ‘labour’, ‘employment’ and ‘work’,
2. Become familiar with debates and perspectives on key terms such as consent, un/freedom, wage relations, resistance, social reproduction and production.
3. Explore not only how work and labour have been conceptualized and studied in geography, but how they could be.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE:**

<b>Seminar Participation:</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>various dates</b>
<b>Seminar Presentation:</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>weekly classes</b>
<b>Major Paper Outline:</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>Week 8, November 1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Proposal Peer review:</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>various dates</b>
<b>Major Paper:</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>Week 13, December 6<sup>th</sup></b>

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Seminar participation:**

Participating in class discussions is a fundamental part of your work in this course. You are asked to do all of the required readings before class each week (including your peers' weekly thought piece) and to come prepared to take part in respectful and thoughtful discussion. It is recognized that we all come to the class with different backgrounds and comfort levels in engaging in group discussions. To that effect, participation grades will not be based on those who speak the most or the loudest. Your evaluation will be based on the quality of your contributions, the constructiveness of your engagements both with your peers' comments and the course material, and your efforts to foster a supportive space in the classroom and a productive learning experience for everyone.

**Seminar presentation:**

Each student (either in pairs or individually depending on enrollment) will make a 20-minute presentation introducing the week's readings to the class. This will not be just a summary but a critical introduction to the readings which highlights what you feel are some of the key themes of the readings and ideas about how the readings might relate to each other. As part of your seminar presentation you will post a 500-word thought-piece on blackboard the day before class (Friday) that will offer a short synthetic discussion of the readings for this week. Please formulate three questions to pose to the class – these questions are intended to prompt critical and thoughtful discussion amongst the class, so care should be taken to make them straightforward, provocative and/or productive. You are also asked to facilitate the discussion for the first hour. The breakdown for assessment will be: presentation, questions and class facilitation 10%; thought-piece 10% ***Important note: Please be advised that some students who sign up for a seminar presentation in November or late October may not receive their first mark until after the course drop date (September 20<sup>th</sup>).***

**Proposal peer review:**

You will also be asked to conduct an in-class, oral 10-minute informal peer review of a draft of one of your peers' proposals during a particular week mid-course (worth 5%). This will take the form of an informal conversation with the proposal writer in which you give feedback on how the writer might strengthen a number of dimensions, which could include: a) the central aims, questions or arguments of the paper (are the questions too broad? Are the concepts under scrutiny or the paper's aims unclear?); b) its size, scope or structure (is this too much work for one paper? Too easy?); and the proposed literature to be used (do the texts allow the writer to 'get at' their topic directly? Are there ones they are overlooked? Have they clearly articulated what each text is about and how it is going to help them write their paper?).

**Major paper proposal:**

You will be required to submit a three-page proposal and a short annotated bibliography of a minimum of 5 academic sources that will introduce your proposed topic, and the specific issues or questions you think you will want to explore. This topic must be substantively different than (but can be related to or build from) the topic you present on in class. **Due on Quercus: Week 8, November 1<sup>st</sup> (midnight).**

**Major paper:**

Your final paper must be on a topic of your choosing that offers a spatial analysis of work, labour and/or employment through one of the themes of the course – identity, agency, justice or value. It should be double spaced and around 14-15 pages long. **Due on Quercus: December 6<sup>th</sup> Week 13 (midnight).**

**WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS:**

## **WEEK 1: September 13<sup>th</sup> - Introduction to each other and to the course**

- *No readings for this week*

## **WEEK 2: September 20<sup>th</sup>**

### **“Work”, ‘employment’, “labour”: troubling concepts and frameworks in the social sciences**

- Marx, K. (1887) Sections 1 (the two factors of the commodity: use value and value); 2 (The two-fold character of labour embodied in commodities) and 3 (The form of value or exchange value) in *Capital Volume 1*.
- Grint, K. (2005) “Chapter 1: What is Work?” in *The Sociology of Work*. Third Edition. Polity Press.

### **Further readings:**

- For help with Marx, see Harvey (2010) Chapter 1 in *A companion to Marx’s Capital* Verso. pp.15-37 (only his writing on sections 1-3).

## **WEEK 3: September 27<sup>th</sup>**

### **Marxist formulations of the labour process, value and surplus value**

- Marx, K. (1887) Chapters 7 and 8 of “Part 3: The Production of Absolute Surplus Value” in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy (Volume 1)*. Progress Publishers, Moscow. pp.127 onwards to the end of chapter 8.
- Harvey, D., & Marx, K. K. (2010) “Chapter 4: The Labour Process and the Production of Value” in *A companion to Marx’s Capital* p109-124. Verso.

### **Further readings:**

- If helpful, David Harvey offers a full roster of very helpful YouTube lectures on Capital Volume I – see chapters 7 and 8 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RmtkfVeK7w&list=PL0A7FFF28B99C1303&index=5>. If you watch it pay close attention to excerpts 15m:30s-30m.

## **WEEK 4: October 4<sup>th</sup>**

### **Whose work counts? Value, production, and reproductive labour**

### **~ PROPOSAL PEER REVIEWS WEEK 1 ~**

- Dalla Costa, M. & James, S. (1972) The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community” in *A Women’s Place* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Butler and Tanner Ltd. 1975)
- Fortunati, L. ([1981]1995) Chapters 1 and 2 in *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*.
- Mitchell, Marston and Katz (2004) Chapter 1 in *Life's Work: Geographies of Social Reproduction*. Wiley Blackwell.

### **Further reading:**

- Hartmann, H.I. (1979) The unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism: Towards a more progressive union. *Capital & Class*, 3 (2), pp. 1-33.

- Hartmann, Heidi I. 1981. "The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework." *Signs*, 366–94.
- Smith, P. (1978[2013]) "Domestic labour and Marx's theory of value", in A. Kuhn and A-M Wolpe (eds.), *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London. pp 198-219.

## **WEEK 5: October 11<sup>th</sup>**

***NO CLASS – reading week***

## **WEEK 6: October 18<sup>th</sup>**

### **Conceptualizing and geo-historicizing racial capitalism**

**~ PROPOSAL PEER REVIEWS WEEK 1 ~**

- Robinson, C. (2000) Part I (Prefaces, and Chapters 1, 2, and 3) of *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*.

### **Further readings:**

- Melamed, J. "Racial Capitalism" 76-85.
- Gilmore, R.W. (2002) "Race and Globalization" in *Geographies of Global Change: Remapping the World*. In Ed. R.J. Johnson et al. (New York, Wiley Blackwell). P 261.
- Strauss, K. (2020) Labour geography III: Precarity, racial capitalisms and infrastructure *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 44(6) 1212–1224

## **WEEK 7: October 25<sup>th</sup>**

### **Racial formations, labour hierarchies and whiteness: Anglo-American contexts**

**~ PROPOSAL PEER REVIEWS WEEK 2 ~**

- Nakano Glenn, E. (2002) Chapter: "Mexicans and Anglos in the Southwest" *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor*. Cambridge, USA Harvard University Press.
- Roediger, D. (2005) Chapters 1 and 2 In *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White*. Basic Books: New York.

### **Further reading:**

- Montgomery, David. 2000. "Empire, Race, and Working-Class Mobilizations." *Racializing Class, Classifying Race: Labour and Difference in Britain, the USA and Africa*, 1–31.

## **WEEK 8: November 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **Laboured identities I: intersectional feminist constructions of work and class**

**~ PAPER PROPOSALS DUE ~**

- Crenshaw, K. (1989) Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*. 1(8): 139-168.

- Hill Collins, P. (1990) "Work, Family and Black Women's Oppression." In *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. Routledge: New York. Pp 43-66.
- hooks, b. (2000) "Rethinking the nature of work" in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*. Cambridge: Pluto Press. Pp.95-106.

#### **Further reading:**

- Niliasca, T. (2011) Some Women's Work: Domestic Work, Class, Race, Heteropatriarchy, and the Limits of Legal Reform. *Michigan Journal of Race & Law*
- Carby, Hazel, 1997, "White Woman Listen!!" in Hennessy and Ingraham 1997, pp. 110–128.

#### **WEEK 9: November 8<sup>th</sup>**

##### **Laboured identities II: perspectives on agency and the atomized working subject**

- Roberts, D.E. 1997. Spiritual and menial housework. *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism* 9.
- Wright, M. (1999) Crossing the factory frontier: gender, place and power in the Mexican maquiladora *Antipode* 29(3): 278-302.
- Coe, N. and Jordhus-Lier, D. C. (2011) Constrained agency? Re-evaluating the geographies of labour. *Progress in Human Geography*, 35(2), 211–233.

#### **Further reading:**

- *For the full reading of Coe's brief discussion above about Katz's 3Rs: Resilience, Reworking, Resistance, see Katz, C. 2004) "Negotiating the Recent Future" in Growing up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, pp.239-260.*
- Poster, W. (2007) Who's on the line? Indian call center agents pose as Americans for U.S.-outsourced firms. *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 271-304.

#### **WEEK 10: November 15<sup>th</sup>**

##### **Nonstandard employment and work: perspectives on what it means to be 'precarious'**

- Beck, U. (1992) "Destandardization of labor", in *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Sage Publications: London. pp. 139-154.
- Denning, M. (2010) Wageless Life. *New Left Review*
- Wills, J (2009) Subcontracted Employment and Its Challenge to Labor. *Labor Studies Journal*. 34(4) 441-460.

#### **Further reading:**

- Bourdieu, P. (1998) "La précarité est partout aujourd'hui", *Contre-feux*.
- Tilly, C. (1996) *Half A Job: Bad and Good Part-Time Jobs in a Changing Labor Market*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia.

## **WEEK 11: November 22<sup>nd</sup>**

### **Challenging epochal narratives on precarity: (re)placing precarious labour in time and space**

- McDowell, L (2015) The lives of others: transformational narratives and service sector work. *Economic Geography*. 91(1) 1-23.
- Stanford, J. (2017). The resurgence of gig work: Historical and theoretical perspectives. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 28(3), 382–401
- Gidwani, V., and A. Maringanti (2016) The Waste-Value Dialectic Lumpen Urbanization in Contemporary India. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 36 (1): 112–33.

#### **Further reading:**

- Munck, R. (2013) The Precariat: a view from the South, *Third World Quarterly*, 34:5, 747-762.

## **WEEK 12: November 29<sup>th</sup>**

### **Labour migration and the making of the nation state: freedom, mobility, consent and the contract**

- Mongia, R. (2018) *Indian Empire and Empire: A Colonial Genealogy of the Modern State*. Duke University Press.

#### **Further reading:**

- Mongia, R. (2021) On Learning Lessons from the Past: Slavery, Freedom, and Migration Regulation. *Cultural Dynamics*. 33(3) 267–272. *[A helpful commentary Mongia has penned about the key contributions of her work in Cultural Dynamics which might be of use]*

## **WEEK 13: December 6<sup>th</sup>**

### **Coloniality and care: interventions on the international division of reproductive labour**

- Raghuram, P. (2012). Global care, local configurations - challenges to conceptualizations of care. *Global Networks*, 12(2) pp. 155–174.
- Vasudevan P, Smith S. (2020) The domestic geopolitics of racial capitalism. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*. 2020;38(7-8):1160-1179.
- Mullings, B. (2009) Neoliberalization, social reproduction and the limits to labour in Jamaica. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 30:174-188.

#### **Further reading:**

- Mies, Maria. 1998. Chapters 3 and 4 *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*. Palgrave MacMillan.

## **Policies**

The department's full [Graduate Course Policies](#) apply to all courses offered.

## **Accessibility Services**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations because you are disabled, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Where there is an accommodation recommended by [Accessibility Services](#), the department and/or instructors will be provided with an accommodation letter.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic misconduct by graduate students is taken very seriously. The University's policy on academic misconduct is found in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) (the Code). Students in graduate studies are expected to commit to the highest standards of integrity and to understand the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. For example, it is assumed that they bring to their graduate studies a clear understanding of how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism.

Regarding plagiarism, the Code includes the following statements:

B.i.1. It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

(d) to represent as one's own idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism.

Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on "knowing," the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.

Other academic offences include the possession and/or use of unauthorized aids in examinations, submitting the same paper for different courses without the knowledge of the instructors, forgery (whether of academic records or other documents), concocting facts or references to sources, personating someone, and other forms of cheating and academic dishonesty. Please refer to sections B.i.1. and B.i.3. in the Code for detailed descriptions of offences applicable to students.

The [SGS Academic Integrity Resources webpage](#) outlines the policy on academic misconduct and the process for handling an allegation of academic misconduct.

## **Religious Accommodations**

Students must alert instructors in a timely fashion to any upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences. Instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, exams or other compulsory activities at these times. In the case of an unavoidable conflict with a compulsory activity, every reasonable effort is made to give students the opportunity to make up missed work.

## **Copyright in Instructional Settings**

If a student wishes to record (tape, video, photograph, etc.) any lecture presentations or other similar materials provided by the instructor; the instructor's written consent must be obtained beforehand. Otherwise, all such reproduction is infringement of copyright and prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

## **Extension Requests**

The authority to grant an extension to submit coursework beyond the sessional grade deadline is with the department and not the instructor of the course. To request a formal extension beyond a grade deadline, students must submit a Coursework Extension Form, completed by both the student and course instructor, to the relevant graduate department prior to the final grade deadline.

In order to ensure fairness in granting extensions, the department must be reasonably certain that:

- The reasons for delay are serious and substantiated.
- The student is not granted unfair advantage over other students in the course.
- The student has a reasonable chance of completing the outstanding work within the time allotted.
- The normal and satisfactory completion of any new coursework is not in jeopardy.

Extension requests for medical reasons (e.g. short-term illness) must be accompanied by a medical note. Extension requests for students with accommodations due to disability must be supported by documentation from Accessibility Services. Extension requests for other reasons must be detailed in the form or a note to the department.

## **Mental Health Statement**

As a student at U of T, you may experience circumstances and challenges that can affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. There is no wrong time to reach out, which is why there are resources available for every situation and every level of stress.

Please take the time to inform yourself of available resources, including:

- [Geography & Planning Mental Health Support Website](#)
- [Graduate Wellness Services](#)
- [Student Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Emergency support if you're feeling distressed](#)

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## **Other Student Services and Support Resources**

- [Links to Additional Student Services and Support Resources](#) (general services and support for students, international student support, Health & Wellness, financial aid and professional development)