

POL S 334: Violence, Exploitation & Exclusion in US Labor Markets

Tu/Th. 1-2:20 - *Synchronous*

Professor Thorpe

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Office Hours: Th. 3:30-5:30pm

This course examines recurring practices of violence, exploitation and exclusion in U.S. labor markets. The material unfolds in three parts: First, we examine foundational theories of economic and political power, including classical liberal, Marxist and feminist perspectives. Second, we apply and interrogate these theories in the context of racialized labor (spanning from slavery and convict leasing to mass incarceration and prison labor), gendered labor (including domestic/caring labor and sex work) and contingent labor (migrant and undocumented labor). Finally, we shift focus to the development and growth of underground economies, including the drug trade and sex industry. Students are encouraged to question the ways in which racial, ethnic, gendered and geographic hierarchies create and fortify categories of citizenship and belonging as well as subjectivities of contingency and vulnerability, and to conceptualize labor as a site of struggle, resistance and solidarity.

Remote Learning/Expectations

The course will take place synchronously at the following link: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/99615271586>. Since this is a small class, student participation and interactions are strongly encouraged! However, lecture recordings will also be available on Canvas to students enrolled in the class. Sharing recordings outside of class violates student rights under FERPA. Office hours and sections will **not** be recorded.

Course Material

Course texts are available for book purchase and for free download on Canvas. All other required reading materials, podcasts and videos are posted on the course website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1447498>. Daily reading of *The New York Times* is also strongly encouraged. Subscriptions at reduced college rates are available here: <https://www.nytimes.com/subscription/education/student?campaignId=6WYWY>

Course Requirements

The grading is based on three (3) short (500-650 word) reading response papers, participation in sections, and three exams. There is also an option for students to write a policy memo on a relevant labor issue and teach the class about your topic during week 10. If students choose to write the policy memo this will replace the lowest exam score. The decision to write the memo must be made by April 30, and this decision is final.

A total of three (3) 500-650-word reading response papers will be due at 12 noon on Fridays. I will post 2-3 discussion questions on Canvas each week to help guide your reading of course material. The prompts will ask you to address a question or argument raised in the assigned readings and are meant to serve as foundation for section discussions. Responses must be uploaded to Canvas before your Friday section begins in order to receive full credit. The responses will be graded as superb (4.0), very good (3.5), satisfactory (3.0), needs improvement (2.5) or unsatisfactory (no credit).

The exams will be available on Canvas. Each exam will ask students will to complete two essays based on class readings, lectures and discussions. You will have 48 hours to complete each of the exams. They will open note and open book, but students are required to work independently. Working with other students during the exams is a violation of university policies on academic honesty.

You will turn in your response papers, exams and (optional) research memo on Canvas. The website uses SimCheck, which is designed to identify plagiarism by indicating the amount of original text and whether quotations are appropriately sourced.

Section will focus on applying course themes to contemporary issues. Students are expected to come prepared to address the reading questions listed on Canvas and to participate in the discussions. This is an opportunity for you to engage with other in small settings, and your participation affects the group dynamic. If you have difficulties speaking in public, you can discuss this with your TA. (The chat feature is also a nice option!) If you must miss section, please be sure to notify your TA in advance.

Students can choose to write an 7-8-page (double-spaced) research memo that: 1) identifies a relevant labor issue, 2) outlines the source of the problem/ controversy, and 3) proposes a remedy. For students that select this option, you must notify your TA and submit a 1-2 page description of paper topics on April 30. Students are expected to present their research in-progress to the class during week 10 (8-10 min.). The written memos will be due during finals week. This grade will replace the lowest exam score.

Evaluation

Exam 1 (15%)

Exam 2 (25%)

Exam 3 (30%)

Section Participation (15%)

Response papers (15%)

Memo + student teach-ins (optional) - grade will replace lowest exam score

Learning Objectives

- Understanding racialized, gendered and contingent labor markets in historical and contemporary contexts
- Thinking critically about the ways in which subjugated labor markets produce and reproduce disadvantage and vulnerability across sectors and over time
- Examining organized resistance that disrupts or unsettles economic arrangements and social hierarchies
- Conducting independent research projects

Your Physical & Mental Health

Given the extraordinary circumstances regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, I will be flexible about deadlines throughout the quarter. However, you must communicate with me ASAP if you are experiencing difficulties resulting from personal or family illness, financial hardship or family circumstances. I will make every effort to make appropriate accommodations that will help you succeed in this class, while allowing you to prioritize your physical mental and emotional wellbeing.

Diversity Statement

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that diversity within the classroom be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. I will strive to present materials and activities in ways that respect and affirm such differences. I expect the same of you: while discomfort is an important part of the learning process, nobody should be made to feel unsafe in this classroom. I will not create or allow space for offensive language or behavior related to differences in gender, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual and physical ability, sexual

orientation, income, faith, socio-economic class, family status, primary language, military experience, political identification, cognitive style, and communication style.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All students should make sure they familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#)

Campus Resources

Reporting Incidents of Bias

If you or someone you know experiences or witnesses bias at the individual, institutional, or systemic level, the University has created a report form that may be used to document and report these experiences: <https://report.bias.washington.edu/>

Counseling & Mental Health

The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students.

If you are experiencing a psychological crisis and cannot wait until the Counseling Center open, please call the Crisis Clinic at 866-427-4747 or the King County Crisis Line at 206-461-3222.

Hall Health Center also offers mental health care, including individual counseling and therapy, crisis counseling and intervention, medication evaluation and management, group therapy and support groups, campus outreach services, mindfulness meditation, and after-hours care. You can make an appointment at Hall Health by calling 206-543-5030.

The Q Center

The University of Washington Q Center is a primarily student run resource center dedicated to serving anyone with or without a gender or sexuality – UW students, staff, faculty, alum, and community members. Resources include one-on-one advising, support for student groups, regular events, a lending library, and student blog. You can visit the Q Center in the Husky Union Building, Room 315 or online at: <http://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/wordpress/>

Access and Accommodations

I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the **Disabilities Support Services Office** and who provide me with necessary documentation. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu.

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

Course Schedule

Part I: Racial Capitalism

Week 1- March 30: Course Introduction

April 1: The Meaning of Work: Liberalism, Capital & Labor

--John Locke. 1690. "Chapter 5: Of Property," in *Two Treatises of Government (Book II)*

--James Madison. 1787. "Federalist 10," in *The Federalist Papers*

April 2: Listen or Read: Jill Lepore, "What's Wrong with the Way We Work," *The New Yorker*, January 11, 2021

Week 2 – April 6: Racial Orders/Racial Capitalism

--Michael McCann & Feliz Kahraman. "Beyond the Binary: On the Interdependence of Liberal and Illiberal/Authoritarian Forms in Racial Capitalist Regimes." Working paper.

--Douglas Blackmon. "From Alabama's Past, Capitalism Teamed with Racism to Create Cruel Partnership," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 16, 2001

April 8: Racial Segregation & Social Inequality

--Angela Stuesse. 2016. *Scratching Out a Living*, chapters 2-3

--Listen: "A 'Forgotten History' of How the U.S. Government Segregated America," Fresh Air: NPR Interview with Richard Rothstein, May 3, 2017

April 9: Listen or Read: Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*, June 2014

Week 3 – April 13: Racial Stratification & Mass Incarceration

--Bruce Western & Becky Pettit, "Incarceration & Social Inequality," *Daedalus*, Summer 2010

--John Clegg & Adaner Usmani, "The Economic Origins of Mass Incarceration," *Catalyst*, Fall 2019

Exam 1 will be available on Canvas at the end of class (2:20pm)

April 15: **No class: Exam 1 due by 2:20 pm today**

April 16: **No Sections: Read something interesting or do something fun!**

Part II: Extractive Labor Markets

Week 4 – April 20: April 27: Social Reproduction Theory & Care Labor

--Karl Marx. 1887. "Chapter 23: Simple Reproduction" in *Capital*

--Tithi Bhattacharya. 2013. "What is Social Reproduction Theory?" *Socialist Worker*

--Nancy Fraser. 2017. "Crisis of Care? On Social-Reproduction Contradictions in Contemporary Capitalism," in *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*

April 22: Immigration & Migrant Labor

--Seth M. Holmes. 2013. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, Chapter 1

--Angela Stuesse. 2016. *Scratching Out a Living*, Chapter 5

April 23: Listen or Read: Brooke Jarvis, "The Scramble to Pick 24 Billion Cherries in Eight Weeks," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 12, 2020. OR

Listen or Read: Jordon Kisner, "The Lockdown Showed How the Economy Exploits Women. She Already Knew," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 17, 2021.

Week 5 – April 27: Invisible Violence/ Politics of Sight

--Timothy Pachirat. 2013. *Every Twelve Seconds*, Chapter 1, 6, 9

April 29: Disposable Workers/ Politics of Sight

--Seth M. Holmes. 2013. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, Chapter 6

--Angela Stuesse. 2016. *Scratching Out a Living*, Chapter 6

April 30: Watch: Rape in the Fields, PBS Documentary, June 25, 2013

***Optional research topics due prior to section**

Week 6 – May 4: Repression & Resistance

--Michael McCann and George I. Lovell. 2020. *Union By Law: Filipino American Labor Activism, Rights Radicalism, and Racial Capitalism*, Chapter 1

--Angela Stuesse. 2016. *Scratching Out a Living*, Chapter 7

May 6: Displacement, Poverty & Rural Prison Communities

--John Eason. 2017. *Big House on the Prairie: Rise of the Rural Ghetto and Prison Proliferation*, Intro, Ch. 4

--Rebecca U. Thorpe. 2015. "Perverse Politics: The Persistence of Mass Imprisonment in the 21st Century." *Perspectives on Politics*, 13: 618-637.

May 7: Listen or Read: Erika Hayasaki, "Amazon's Great Labor Awakening," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 18, 2021.

Week 7 – May 11: Carceral Economies & Prison Labor

--Lan Cao. 2019. "Made in the USA: Race, Trade, and Prison Labor," *New York University Review of Law & Social Change* 43: 1, pp. 1-34.

Exam 2 will be available on Canvas at the end of class (2:20pm)

May 13: **No class: Exam 2 due by 2:20 pm today**

May 14: **Project work day: Discussion of research in-progress**

Part III: Underground Markets & Illicit Labor

Week 8 - May 18: The Political Economy of US Drug Wars

--Curtis Marez. 2004. *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics*, Introduction

--Kathleen Frydl. 2013. *The Drug Wars in America, 1940-1973*, Introduction

May 20: Labor Radicalism, American Empire & the Drug Trade

--Curtis Marez. 2004. *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics*, Chapter 4 & 7

May 21: Donna Murch. 2015. "Crack in Los Angeles: Crisis, Militarization, and Black Response to the Late Twentieth-Century War on Drugs." *Journal of American History*, 102: 162-173.

Week 9 – May 25: Sex Work & "Servant" Labor

--Laura María Agustín. 2007. *Sex at the Margins*, Chapter 1, 3

--Barbara Ehrenreich, "Maid to Order," in *Global Women: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*

May 27: Invisible Labor

--Laura María Agustín. 2007. *Sex at the Margins*, Chapter 4, 6

--David Segal, "Housekeepers Face a Disaster Generations in the Making," *The New York Times*, September 18, 2020

--Listen: Cardiff Garcia & Darius Rafieyan. "The Uncounted Workforce," The Indicator from Planet Money: National Public Radio, June 29, 2020.

May 28: Vanessa Carlisle, "How to Build a Hooker's Army," *N+I*, February 5, 2021

Week 10 – June 1: **Student teach-ins**

Exam 3 will be available on Canvas at the end of class (2:20pm)

June 3: **Student teach-ins**

Exam due by 2:20 pm today

June 4: **No sections: Optional Office Hours for discussion of research in-progress**

Research memo due Tues. June 8 (exam week)