

POL S 373: Violence, Exploitation & Exclusion in US Labor Markets

Tu/Th. 11:30-12:50 – *GUG 218*

Professor Thorpe

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Office hours (zoom): Wed. 3-4:30 & by appt:

<https://washington.zoom.us/j/5238926070>

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Office Hours (zoom): Th/Th 1:30-2:30

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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.

In-Person Learning/Expectations

The course will take place in person, barring any unforeseen exigencies. Lectures and sections will not be recorded. Please contact the professor and TA immediately if you will need to miss class on account of your health or other personal circumstances.

Week 1 - Remote Learning

In accordance with university policy, the first week of this course will be conducted via live Zoom sessions at the scheduled class times. These sessions will be recorded and will capture the presenter's audio, video and computer screen. The recordings will only be accessible to students enrolled in the course. These recordings will not be shared with or accessible to the public.

Link for Jan 4 & 6 lectures here: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/91716324487>

Link for Jan 7 AA section (11:30): <https://washington.zoom.us/j/91035659886>

Link for Jan 7 AB section (12:30): <https://washington.zoom.us/j/92130447159>

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/1518880> 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=6WYWWY>

Course Requirements

The grading is based on three (3) short (500-650 word) reading response papers, participation in sections, two (2) take-home exams and a final project.

A total of three (3) 500-650-word reading response papers will be due at 11am 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. Exams will be 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) final paper/project 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. If you must miss section, please be sure to notify your TA in advance.

Student projects should 1) identify a relevant labor issue, 2) outline the source of the problem/controversy, and 3) propose a remedy. You may draw from any of the subjects covered on the syllabus or a different labor practice. The standard format is a 7-8 page paper (doubled-spaced), but you may also elect to use a different format (e.g., podcast, video, etc.) rather than a paper. You may work independently or with a group of 2-3 students. We will have an informal discussion of research in-progress in week 10. The projects are due during finals week. A brief summary of your research topic, format and (if relevant) group members are due February 4.

Evaluation

Exam 1 (10%)

Exam 2 (25%)

Section Participation (15%)

Response papers (15%)

Research outline (5%) – due February 4

Student projects + presentations (30%)

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- Jan 4: Course Introduction

Jan 6: The Meaning of Work: Liberalism, Capital & Labor

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

Jan 7: Listen or Read: Jill Lepore, "What's Wrong with the Way We Work," *The New Yorker*, January 11, 2021 [29 min. listen]

Week 2 – Jan 11: 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

Jan 13: 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 [35 min. listen]

Jan 14: Listen or Read: Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*, June 2014 [1h 28m listen]

Week 3 – Jan 18: Racial Stratification & Mass Incarceration

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

--Listen: Cardiff Garcia & Darius Rafieyan. "The Uncounted Workforce," *The Indicator* from Planet Money: National Public Radio, June 29, 2020. [9 min. listen]

Exam 1 will be available at 4:30 pm today

Jan 20: **No class: Exam 1 due by 8pm today**

Jan 21: **No Sections: Read something interesting or do something fun!**

Part II: Extractive Labor Markets

Week 4 – Jan 25: 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* (pp. 21-26 & 32-36 required)

Jan 27: Immigration & Migrant Labor

- Seth M. Holmes. 2013. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, Chapter 1
- Angela Stuesse. 2016. *Scratching Out a Living*, Chapter 5

Jan 28: Listen or Read: Jordon Kisner, "The Lockdown Showed How the Economy Exploits Women. She Already Knew," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 17, 2021. [42 min listen]

Week 5 – Feb 1: Invisible Violence/ Politics of Sight

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

Feb 3: Disposable Workers/ Politics of Sight

- Seth M. Holmes. 2013. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, Chapter 6
- Angela Stuesse. 2016. *Scratching Out a Living*, Chapter 6
- Watch: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Meatpacking, February 21, 2021

Feb 4: Listen or Read: Brooke Jarvis, "The Scramble to Pick 24 Billion Cherries in Eight Weeks," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 12, 2020. [38 min listen]

***Research topics due at 11am**

Week 6 – Feb 8: American Empire & Labor Radicalism

- 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
- Nina Lakhani, "'An Act of Rebellion': The Young Farmers Revolutionizing Puerto Rico's Agriculture," *The Guardian*, December 23, 2021

Feb 10: Guest Speaker

Feb 11: Listen or Read: Erika Hayasaki, "Amazon's Great Labor Awakening," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 18, 2021. [44 min. listen]

Week 7 – Feb 15: Flex day/ make-up

Exam 2 will be available by 4:30pm today

Feb 17: No class: Exam 2 due by 8pm today

Feb 18: Project work day: Discussion of research in-progress

Part III: Underground Markets & Illicit Labor

Week 8 – Feb 22: The Political Economy of US Drug Wars

--Curtis Marez. 2004. *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics*, Introduction, Chapter 3

--Donna Murch, "How Race Made the Opioid Crisis," *The Boston Review*, August 27, 2019

Feb 24: 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*

Feb 25: 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 – March 1: Invisible Labor & the Construction of Victimhood

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

--David Eichert. 2020. "'It Ruined My Life': FOSTA, Male Escorts, and the Construction of Sexual Victimhood in American Politics," *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law*, 26 (3): 202-245.

March 3: Guest Speaker

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

Week 10 – March 8: **Presentations/Research in-progress**

March 10: **Presentations/Research in-progress**

March 11: **Presentations/Research in-progress**

Projects due Tues. March 15 (exam week)