

SOCIOLOGY OF WORK

SOC 116, Spring 2019

Instructor

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Office hours: Monday 3-4pm and

Friday 11.30-12.30am or by appointment

Reader

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Course description

The course is an introduction to the sociology of work. The objective of the course is threefold: It gives an overview over contributions from important thinkers, covers essential aspects of work and working lives, and presents current debates related to work and society. The first part (weeks 1– 4) is dedicated to the theoretical foundations of the field. The course presents major thinkers and discusses their specific contributions to the sociology of work. The second part (weeks 5 – 10) deals with important aspects of working lives such as skill formation, the labor market, the organization of work, collective bargaining, welfare, and the international division of labor. The third part (weeks 11 – 15) introduces current debates related to the world of work including the role of migrant labor, the nature of knowledge work, the challenge of care work, work-life-balance, as well as the growing polarization between good and bad jobs.

Organization

We will meet three times a week (MWF 10-11am in 100 Koerber 160). Students are expected to attend lectures, engage in discussions, and prepare readings. Preparation implies that students can recap the content of the readings, identify main arguments and explain the main conclusions. The readings are not a substitute for the lectures. Rather than summarizing the content of the lecture they mostly deal with specific aspects of the topic discussed in class. The main purpose of the course is to learn. An essential component of learning is to ask questions. Students should therefore never hesitate to ask questions. Feel free to interrupt me whenever you have a question, or something is unclear, or you cannot follow (most likely you are not the only one who has a problem). Your questions help me to make myself clearer and understandable and are therefore an important contribution to the success of the course. If you have continuous difficulties or want to talk about the class and related issues, please visit me during my office hours.

Course Material

All readings are available for download at the [bcourses website](#) under the heading modules. There is a module for each part of the class with the respective readings.

Assignments

- First take-home exam (short essay related to the first part of the course); due on March 7
- Second take-home exam (3 questions related to the second part of the course); due on April 11
- Final in-class exam (5 out of 6 questions; 90 minutes); May 14, 3-6pm.

Evaluation

- First take-home exam: 25%
- Second take-home exam: 30%
- Final in-class exam: 45%

Submission

The first and second take-home exams are to be submitted as word document (including name and student number) on the bcourse website until midnight of the submission date (further guidelines will be posted). We will take two points of your grade for every day that has passed after the submission date.

Communication

Communication is very important for a smooth facilitation of the course. Students are strongly encouraged to visit me during office hours, especially if they encounter any problems to follow the course or to meet the evaluation requirements. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to contact me – then it is often too late to do something about your problems. Email is a very convenient way of communication, but students should notice that I may need time to respond to emails (I will try to respond within 24 hours from Monday to Friday).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the appropriation and representation as one's own of the words or ideas of someone else. Even if confined to a short phrase, it is a grave act of academic dishonesty and grounds for failure of the course or academic discipline. No source in any form or medium—including encyclopedias, dictionaries, textbooks, internet material, unpublished material, work by other students, material without a copyright—may be used without full acknowledgement and, in the case of direct quotes, quotation marks. For further reference, see <http://uga.berkeley.edu/sas/rights.shtml> and <http://www.web-miner.com/plagiarism>.

Accommodations for Disabilities

The Disabled Students' Program (DSP) is the campus office responsible for verifying that students have disability-related needs and for planning appropriate accommodations. Students who need accommodations for disabilities must obtain a letter of confirmation from the DSP. If you already have a Letter of Accommodation from the DSP, please pass it on immediately, if you receive one, as soon as possible, so that I am able to make necessary arrangements in a timely manner.

Course schedule

01/23 Introduction

I) THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

01/25 **Adam Smith:** Division of Labor

‘The Division of Labor’ from the Wealth of Nations (London: Penguin Classics, 1982), pp. 109-117.

01/28: **Karl Marx:** Exploitation

‘The Length of the Working Day’ from Capital Vol 1 (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), pp. 656-667

01/30: **Karl Marx:** Alienation

‘Alienated Labor’, from Amy S. Wharton, ed., Working in America (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2015), pp. 3-10.

02/01 **Max Weber:** Work Ethics and Bureaucratization

‘Bureaucracy’, from Amy S. Wharton, ed., Working in America (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2015), pp. 11-16.

02/04 **Karl Polanyi:** Commodification

‘The Self-Regulating Market for the Fictitious Commodities Labor, Land, and Money’, from K. Polanyi, The Great Transformation (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), pp. 71-80.

02/06 **Harry Braverman:** Control and Deskilling

‘The Scientific Technical Revolution and the Worker’, from H. Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), pp. 169-183.

02/08 **Daniel Bell:** Post-industrialism

‘The Coming of the Postindustrial Society’, The Educational Forum Vol 40 No 4 (1976), pp. 574-579.

02/11 **Ariel Hochschild:** Emotional Labor

‘The Managed Heart’, from Amy S. Wharton, ed., Working in America (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2015), pp. 11-16.

02/13 **Andre Gorz:** Sustainability

‘From Enough is Enough to The More the Better’, from A. Gorz, Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 109-126.

02/15 **Guy Standing:** Precarization

‘The Precariat’, from G. Standing, The Precariat. The New Dangerous Class (London Bloomsbury, 2011), pp. 1-25.

II) WORK, ECONOMY, AND SOCIETY

02/20, 02/22

Occupations, skills, technology

* R. Sennet: *The Craftsman* (Yale: Yale University Press 2009), Chapters 1 & 9 (pp. 19-52 & pp. 241-267).

* S. Vaisey (2006): *Education and its Discontents: Overqualification in America, 1972-2002* *Social Forces*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (pp. 835-864).

02/25, 02/27, 03/01

Labor market

* C. Offe: *Disorganized Capitalism* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1985), Chapter 1 (pp. 10-51).

* Lauren A. Rivera, András Tilcsik (2016): *Class Advantage, Commitment Penalty. The Gendered Effect of Social Class Signals in an Elite Labor Market.* *American Sociological Review* Vol. 81(6) (pp. 1097–1131).

03/04, 03/06, 03/08

Work organization and modes of production

* C. Williams, *Rethinking the Future of Work* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan), Chapter 7 (pp. 131-152).

* Schor, Juliet B. et al (without year): *Dependence and Precarity in the Platform Economy.* Unpublished research paper.

March 7: Deadline for first assignment!

03/11, 03/13, 03/15

Trade unions and collective bargaining

* N. Lichtenstein: *A Contest of Ideas: Capital, Politics, and Labor* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013), Chapter 6 (pp. 79-99).

* R. Fantasia & K. Voss: *Hard Work* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), Chapter 2 (pp. 34-77)

03/18, 03/20, 03/22

Work and welfare

* M. Katz: *The Price of Citizenship* (New York: Metropolitan, 2001), Chapter 1 (pp. 9-32).

* D. Shipler: *The Working Poor* (New York: First Vintage, 2005), Chapter 2 (pp. 39-76).

04/03, 04/05

Globalization and the international division of work

* A. Chan and K. Siu, *Made in China. Work and Wages in Walmart Supplier Factories*, in A. Chan, ed., *Walmart in China* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011; pp. 71-94).

* M. Anner, *Solidarity Transformed* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011) Chapter 2 (pp. 22-51).

April 11: Deadline for second assignment!

III) FEATURES OF WORK

04/08, 04/10,

Migrant labor

* R. Waldinger and M. I. Lichter, *How the Other Half Works: Immigration and the Social - Organization of Labor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), Chapter 1 (pp. 3-28)

04/12, 04/15

Knowledge work

* C. Hermann (2009) *Value and Knowledge: Insights from Marxist Value Theory for the Transformation of Work in the Digital Economy*, *Rethinking Marxism*, Vol. 21 No 2 (pp. 275-289).

04/17, 04/19

Care work

* M. Duffy, A. Armenia & L. Stacey: *On the Clock, Off the Radar. Paid Care Work in the United States*. In M. Duffy et al., eds., *Caring on the Clock: The Complexities and Contradictions of Paid Care Work* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015; pp. 3-13).

04/22, 04/24

Work-Life Balance

* H. Boushey, *Finding Time: The Economics of Work-life Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), Introduction and Conclusion (pp. 1-22 and 249-255).

04/26 Guest lecture

04/29, 05/01, 05/03

Good, bad and 'bullshit' jobs

* A. Kalleberg: *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs* (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 2013), Chapter 4 (pp. 61-81).

* D. Graebner, *Bullshit Jobs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-61).

05/14 Final exam (4-6pm).