

## Work in the 'New' Economy

Soc 390 Section 1, Mon/Weds 10-11:50am  
Grinnell College, ARH 227, Fall 2014

Professor: Karla A. Erickson

Email: ericksok@grinnell.edu

Phone: (641) 269-3330

Office Hours: Monday 1-3pm, and Wednesday 3-4pm. There is a sign-up sheet outside my office (ARH 116B) posted weekly

*"Where people produce most goods and services outside of organized market economies, their variable monetary incomes and access to monetary capital do not necessarily determine whether they thrive or suffer. In extensively monetized economies, however, variation in human welfare depends heavily on differences between high wages, low wages and no wages; between generous and stingy public benefits; between extensive, meager and no inherited wealth. Furthermore, as wage, benefit, and wealth inequality increase, so do inequalities in human welfare. In this fundamental regard, commercialization of markets for labor, goods, services and capital heightens the moral dilemmas faced by courts and citizens alike."*--Viviana A. Zelizer, *(The Purchase of Intimacy*, 39)

*"As sites of decision-making, [work places] are structured by relations of power and authority; as hierarchical organizations, they raise issues of consent and obedience; as spaces of exclusion, they pose questions about membership and obligation. . . . Work is not only a site of exploitation, domination, and antagonism, but also where we might find the power to create alternatives on the basis of subordinated knowledges, resistant subjectivities, and emergent models of organization."*--Kathi Weeks, *(The Problem of Work*, 2 and 29)

### Course Description

What is the 'new' global economy and how has it transformed the landscape of the American economy in the last four decades? What kinds of lives, identities, and livelihoods are available to workers in the 'new' economy? How do individuals experience the consequences of globalization in their lives, both as workers and consumers?

This course will examine recent transformations in the U.S. economy—including deskilling, downsizing, and the rise of the service sector—and will consider how each of these "transformations" relate to issues of identity, community, family formation, structural inequality and national culture. Work has changed so quickly in the last forty years that we have yet to fully comprehend the micro level consequences in our daily lives and the macro level consequences for American culture and global processes.

We will address key questions about the consequences of globalization and the 'new' economy on American workers and consumers. However, our study will not end at the borders of the United States, instead we will track the flow of labor and capital through case studies of the consequences of globalization in daily practice and experience. We will begin the course by examining recent transformations in the U.S. economy including downsizing, deskilling, interactive service work, and labor migrations. We'll move from considering debates about the consequences of the new economy for American culture and character to examine the

production and consumption processes in global context, global stratification of wealth and the outsourcing of low-wage, low-skill and domestic labor around the globe. Throughout, we will draw on qualitative case studies and the voices of workers in the 'new' economy, always considering how work is lived through race, class, sexuality, gender and nation. Our study will carry us from the historical changes in social mobility and union participation and the shame, confusion, and loss of faith often connected with job loss to the global circulation of women workers who leave their homes and families to clean the homes of, and tend to the intimate needs of families who can afford to purchase such luxuries. This course will require you to apply the tools you have acquired in your studies to date to the cultural study of work at the individual and structural, and at the local and global levels. Hopefully by the end of the course, you will never view the exchange of effort for a wage in quite the same way. Welcome to the course.

### Objectives

1. Introduce students to key theories, methods and questions in the sociological and interdisciplinary study of work.
2. Strengthen our ability to connect micro and macro concepts related to production and consumption. Expand and exercise our skills at connecting the local and the global.
3. Develop a nuanced understanding of how labor processes build on, reinforce and occasionally challenge social inequalities based on race, class, gender, sexuality and nation.
4. Hone our insight into the complexities of how the 'new' economy influences the distribution of opportunities and resources, informing how individuals feel about themselves, form families, negotiate their time, and construct communities.
5. Encourage each of you to familiarize yourself with new terms and to develop a framework for observing, describing and analyzing transformations in labor.
6. Finally, I hope that your sociological study of work and organization will inform your choices, present and future, as workers in the 'new' economy.

### Books & Supplies

Work	Steven Peter Vallas	2012
<i>Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor</i>	Jefferson Cowie	1999
<i>Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy</i>	Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild , eds.	2002

<i>The Managed Hand: Race, Gender and the Body in Beauty Service Work</i>	Miliann Kang	2010
<i>No More Invisible Man: Race and Gender in Men's Work</i>	Adia Harvey Wingfield	2013
<i>The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs and Incomes</i>	Phillip Brown, Hugh Lauder, and David Ashton	2011

### Attendance and Deadlines

This course requires a high level of student interaction, participation and involvement. I expect you to come to class on time, prepared and ready to discuss. Each class meeting you are expected to have read all the assigned readings and have worked in your discussion journal beforehand, in order to come to class prepared to actively discuss the materials. The course starts promptly at 10:00am; I take attendance at the start of class, so be on time. Everyone gets one "oops" as I call it, one day off from the course while still getting full credit for attendance. More than one unexcused absence will affect your participation grade, but more than **three** unexcused absences will lower your **final grade for the course**. When you do need to miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes and an update from a classmate and to contact me regarding your absence. Your written work needs to be in on time. I rarely allow late work to be handed in, and **only** if you contact me in advance of the deadline. Late work will be penalized one letter grade for every day it is late.

### Contacting Me

I expect to stay in contact with students throughout the term. Please come by during my office hours to discuss course content, your thoughts or concerns about assignments, or to get extra assistance. I usually have office hours from 1-3 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Please sign up for a time to see me outside my door (ARH 116B). I am on email frequently throughout the week so that is also a fast way to reach me. I typically do not reply to emails after 5pm or on the weekend, so please address any questions you have to me during working hours or ask a classmate.

### Course Policies

\*If you have a physical or learning disability that requires you to make some adaptations to this course, please contact me to discuss arrangements. All conversations will be confidential. For help with disability services, contact Joyce Stern (3702).

\*In any papers written for this course, you must abide by the College's rules on plagiarism as outlined in the Student Handbook, which require you to "acknowledge explicitly any expressions, ideas, or observations that are not" your own. In addition, I expect that all formal papers will contain a footnote acknowledging any assistance of any kind you received in producing the paper (friends, parents, faculty). I recommend making use of the talent

and assistance of the professionals in the writing lab. If you do go to the writing lab, remember to cite the person who assisted you.

### **Assignments**

1.) Participation	20%
2.) Leading Discussion	10%
4.) Midsem Essay Exam	20%
5.) Concept Memos 2X 10%	20%
6.) Final Paper	20%
7.) Work and Identity: Self-Inquiry	10%

### **Participation**

Since this course is an upper-division sociology seminar, students are expected to take an active role in shaping their learning environment both within and outside the classroom. This means that discussion and leadership by students is built into the course. I consider myself a guide for the course, whose job it is to provide you with the tools to learn. But I expect each of you to make your own way, and to work earnestly to develop your own thinking, language and framework for recognizing and analyzing transformations in labor. I expect you to come to class with your readings done, with prepared responses and ideas, ready to discuss with your classmates, and actively engage with the ideas and challenges posed by myself and the leaders for the day. In addition to your responsibility for planning and leading a class session and contributing questions weekly, I expect students to interact, ask questions, share insights, and push each other's thinking throughout the term. The participation grade is determined by your level of involvement, both in terms of frequency and *quality* of your contributions. If you have any concerns about this portion of the grade, please speak to me early in the term. (20%)

### **Contributing Questions**

This course is also question-driven. As we embark on our study, we will encounter new knowledge and raise many questions along the way. I hope that as you prepare for each class session you will generate key points you want to discuss and a minimum of two excellent questions. Each of you will be assigned to either Monday or Wednesday as your official day to contribute questions. Each of you will be required to contribute **2 discussion questions** for your assigned class meeting. We will sign up to contribute questions during the second week. You will need to read the assignment, and **get the questions to me by email by MIDNIGHT the previous day**. I do not accept late questions, so if those are not in by midnight, they will not count. Your "contributing questions" grade will be based mainly on these weekly contributions and will be calculated as part of your participation grade.

### **Leading Discussion**

Along with a partner, you will be responsible for leading a class discussion for **60-75 minutes** on a day of your choosing. You and another classmate will be responsible for leading discussion, working with the assigned reading for the day and any additional materials you consider important to the topics for that day. You will need to **prepare a handout for your classmates** that outlines your plan for the day, including providing context and key points from the readings, and which outlines crucial

questions from the readings. You will be graded on your planning and ability to lead the class toward an understanding and mastery of the day's assignment.

We will sign up for discussion days during the second week of class. You should review in advance the days you are interested in leading, and consider who you would like to work with as a partner. Once you have picked your day, you will need to read ahead, and decide how you will use the hour for which you are responsible. You should plan to **meet with me** to talk through your plan **during the week prior** to your presentation. You need to **send me a final plan for your presentation by email** no later than midnight the night before your presentation. Your plan should highlight your objectives for the day, the division of responsibility between the two student leaders, and the components of your plan with the intended time to be spent on each.

Your presentation will be evaluated by how thoroughly and effectively you work with the assigned readings for that week, your planning, organization and clarity in leading the class that day and finally, by the creativity and sophistication of the materials you bring in, the questions you use to guide the class, and the activities you design. (10%)

#### **Midsem Exam**

Halfway through the semester I will ask you to synthesize what you have learned about work in the 'new' economy and theories of labor in an essay exam. The exam will be a take-home exam. (20%)

#### **Concept Memos**

Writing solidifies thought and helps you track your ideas and creative impulses. Often we don't know what we know until we write it down. Every good social observer should be primed at all times with a pen or pencil and some paper. Being a sociologist is about being a critically engaged participant in social life, and writing down your observations and reflections is a key step to activating that critical imagination. Toward that end, I encourage all students to keep a discussion journal where you record your reactions and notes in response to the readings prior to discussion, and your ideas and reflections related to in-class discussions, films or activities.

In addition to the suggested use of a discussion journal, you are required to hand in two concept memos. I call these short papers concept memos, because they incorporate two goals: **demonstration of your understanding of course materials, and your own critical thinking and analysis in relation to course concepts**. The short length of these assignments requires you to be efficient in your use of language. You will be graded on the clarity of your writing, evidence of original thinking, and demonstration of critical thinking in relation to the readings for the day. (2 x 10%-20%)

**Analytical Essay** As we move through the term, make note of the issues that are most interesting to you personally, including ideas, images, controversies, or aspects of global work that intrigue you. Next, develop a claim or inquiry that you can explore in a 6-8 page paper. You are required to consult at least **three outside sources** that are not assigned in class. A thesis and abstract for your project will be due Wednesday, October 8. The final paper will be graded on the **quality of your research, the extent of your revisions, the sophistication of your analysis, and the degree to which your work connects with and extends course concepts**. (20%)

**Work and Identity Self-Inquiry** In lieu of a final, you will be responsible for applying course concepts to your own history and future. You will get more guidance in this assignment in the final weeks of the course. (10%)

**Grading Distribution**

94 and up	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
76-79	C+
70-75	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

**Course Schedule**

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Readings from *Gig* are indicated in *italics*.

Fall	Date	Assigned Reading	Topic
1	9/1 M	First Day-Welcome and Introduction to the Course	
	9/3 W	Vallas, 1-36 "Introduction" Gini, 1-12 "You Are What You Do" pweb <i>Public Utilities Specialist</i> 583-588 pweb <i>Steelworker</i> 37-43 pweb <i>WalMart Greeter</i> 1-4 pweb <i>Pretzel Vendor</i> 247-250 pweb	Sociological Studies of Work and Work Culture
2	9/8 M	Taylor, 55-62 "Fundamentals of Scientific Management" pweb Braverman, 69-72 "The Division of Labor" pweb Foucault, 59-72 "Discipline and Punish" pweb Roy, "Banana Time": Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction" 289-312 pweb <i>Ford Auto Worker</i> 43-48 pweb <i>Poultry Factory Worker</i> 227-232 pweb <i>Prisoner</i> 552-557 pweb	Theories of Labor: Controlling the Body
	9/10 W	Marx, 42-49 "Alienated Labour" pweb Burawoy, 13-30 "Toward a Theory of the Capitalist Labor Process" pweb Vallas, 37-59 "Capitalism, Taylorism, and the Problem of Labor Control"	Theories of Labor: Controlling the Self
3	9/15 M	Cowie 1-99 Introduction, In Defiance of Their Master's Voice, 'Anything but an Industrial Town' and Bordering on the Sun Belt	De-Industrialization, Union-Busting, and Corporate Growth
	9/17 W	Cowie 100-179 The New Industrial Frontier, Moving toward a Shutdown, and The Double Struggle	Crossing Borders
4	9/22 M	Cowie 180-209 The Distances In Between, and Epilogue Clawson, 52-62 "Neoliberal Globalization" pweb Piven, 13-15 "The Neoliberal Challenge" pweb	The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism

	9/24	W	Vallas, 60-85 "From Fordism to Flexibility" pweb Macdonald, 1-28 "The Service Society and the Changing Experience of Work" pweb Smith, "Work and Employment at the Turn of the Century" 1-23 pweb "Reputation" Key Concept pweb "The Market" Key Concept pweb	The 'New' Economy
5	9/29	M	Kang 1-132 Introduction, "There's No Business Like the Nail Business", "What Other Work is There?": Manicurists, Hooked on Nails: Customers	Organizational Culture
	10/1	W	Vallas, 113-132 "Ascriptive Inequalities, II: Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity at Work" Kang 133-200 "I Just Put Koreans and Nails Together"; Nail Spas and the Model Minority	Managing Identity
6	10/6	M	Kang 165-238 Black People "Have Not Been the Ones Who Get Pampered": Nail Art Salons and Black-Korean Relations and "You Could Get a Fungus": Asian Discount Nail Salons as the New Yellow Peril	Accommodation, Negotiation and Resistance
	10/8	W	Vallas, 86-112 "Ascriptive Inequalities, I: Gender" Kang 239-254 "Conclusion" Salzinger, 9-34 "Producing Women: Femininity on the Line" pweb	Gendered Labor
			<b>Analytical Essay Thesis and Abstract DUE</b>	
7	10/13	M	Acker, 441-463 "Inequality Regimes" pweb Pierce, 50-82 "Rambo Litigators: Emotional Labor in a Male-dominated Job" pweb Vaught and Smith, 96-115 "Incorporation and Mechanical Solidarity in an Underground Mine" pweb	Work in a "Colorblind" Era
	10/15	W	No Class Midsem Essay Exam DUE - 4pm in CARN 115	

	10/18- 10/26		<b>Fall Break</b>	
8	10/27	M	Ehrenreich, 1-13 Introduction Ehrenreich, 15-30 Love and Gold, Arlie Hochschild Ehrenreich, 39-54 The Care Crisis in the Philippines: Children in the New Global Economy	The Commodification of Care
	10/29	W	Ehrenreich, 230-253 Clashing Dreams: Highly Educated Overseas Brides and Low Wage U.S. Husbands, Hung Cam Thai Ehrenreich, 190-206 Breadwinner No More, Michele Gamburg	The Global Household
9	11/3	M	Zelizer, "Caring Everywhere" 267-279 pweb Ehrenreich, 104-114 Just Another Job? The Commodification of Domestic Labor, Bridget Anderson Ehrenreich, 70-84 Invisible Labors: Caring for the Independent Person, Lynn May Rivas Ehrenreich, 154-168 Selling Sex for Visas: Sex Tourism as a Stepping Stone to International Migration, Denis Brennan	The Economics of Intimacy
	11/5	W	Wingfield, 1-50 "Tokenism Reassessed", "The General Experience of Partial Tokenization" Pierce, 53-70 "Racing for Innocence" pweb	Working Inequalities
10	11/10	M	Bonny Gildin, Ph.D. Invited Guest	Career, Life, Calling, Service
	11/12	W	Wingfield, 51-106 "Interacting with Women in the Workplace" and "Other Men in the Workplace" Desmond, 91-112 "A Joke between Brothers"	Masculinity at Work

11	11/17	M	Wingfield, 107-170 "Black Men and Masculinity" and "Emotional Performance" Moss and Tilly, 249-265 "Soft Skills and Race"	Soft Skills
	11/19	W	Vallas, 133-169 "The Globalization of Work" Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 1-48 "Introduction", "The False Promise" and "Knowledge Wars"	Knowledge Wars
12	11/24	M	Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 49-97 "The Quality-Cost Revolution", "Digital Taylorism", and "The War for Talent"	Digital Taylorism
	11/26	W	Brown, Lauder, and Ashton, 98-146 "Managing in the Global Auction", "High Skills, Low Wages", "The Trap"	Global Auctions
13	12/1	M	Brown, Lauder, and Ashton, 147-164 "A New Opportunity" Brown and Hesheth, 115-146 "Players and Purists" Vallas, 133-169 "The Globalization of Work" and "Conclusion"	New Rules
	12/3	W	Schor, 145-184 "The Economics of Plentitude" Tokumitsu, 1-7 "In the Name of Love" Crawford, 11-53 "Shop class as Soul Craft"	Sustainable Selves
14	12/10	M	Hochschild and Garrett, 93-110 "The Personalized Market and the Marketized Self" pweb Hochschild, 165-180 "The Surrogate's Womb" pweb <b>Other readings TBA</b>	Outsourced Selves
	12/12	W	<b>Last Day - Evaluations and Wrap Up</b>	

**Self-Inquiry DUE - Carr 115**  
9am Friday Dec 19

