COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course has a dual aim. The first is to chart radical transformations in the nature of work, especially in the Global North, over the last forty years, including: the globalization of capital and attendant ‘offshoring’ of jobs; intensifying occupational and existential ‘precarity’; the effects of rapid automation and computerization; the growing ubiquity of so-called ‘immaterial’ and ‘affective’ labour; and the oft-hidden ‘auto-exploitation’ of labouring subjects, via the omnipresence of neoliberal mechanisms of financialization, value-capture, and marketization. Our second goal is to ascertain socioeconomic trends and potentialities in the development of 21st-century capitalism that indicate the emergence of a very different, post-capitalist society, marked by such things as dramatically-reduced labour time (or even the end of ‘work’ as currently understood); a baseline measure of material and symbolic-cultural abundance for all; and the radically democratic organization and management of both polis and economy.

COURSE OUTCOMES

*If you attend to your responsibilities in this course, you will be able to do the following:

*Understand some of the key theoretical texts in work and post-work debates and how they influence the sociological and theoretical work we do.

*Develop clear, well-thought, and increasingly sophisticated responses to questions posed about contemporary society.

*Display facility in and fluency with core theoretical concepts and utilize them in the development of oral and written arguments.
REQUIRED TEXTS

TBA

METHODS OF EVALUATION

This course is seminar-based, and hence reading and writing intensive. The required readings are intended to give students as broad a comprehension of the key debates and issues in each area of social theory as possible. Each student will be expected to give one oral presentation based on class readings, and submit in written form a week after the presentation (2000-2200 words; 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12-scale font), worth 25% of the final grade. Students will also be expected to write one term paper (20-25 pages, 5-6000 words, double-spaced, 12-scale font), worth 60% of the total grade, which will be due Wednesday April 15th by 12 noon. Students are advised to develop a term paper outline by around mid-term and discuss it with the instructor. The remaining 15% is awarded for class participation. (Students missing more than three seminars without legitimate and documentable reasons run the risk of failing the course outright.) All papers submitted may be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com). (The only acceptable excuses for missed deadlines will be for documented medical reasons or family bereavement/illness; late papers will otherwise be docked 5% per day.)

EVALUATION BREAKDOWN:

Oral presentation: 25%
Participation: 15%
Final paper: 60%
Total: 100%

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1 - Jan. 8th – Orientation

Part 1 – Work Today

Week Two - Concepts, Definitions, Origins (Jan. 15th)


**Week Three - (Bull)shit Work (Jan. 22nd)**


**Week Four - ‘Invisible’ Work (Jan. 29th)**


**Week Five - Precarity (Feb. 5th)**


**Week Six – Costs of Work (Feb. 12th)**


**Week Seven – Reading Break (no classes) (Feb. 19th)**

**Week Eight - Automation as Threat (Feb. 26th)**


Pt. 2 – Post-Work Strategies

Week Nine - The Refusal of Work (March 4th)


Week Ten - Alternative Pleasures (March 11th)


Week Eleven - Universal Basic Income (March 18th)


Week Twelve - Technology as Liberation (March 25th)


Week Thirteen - 11. The Common(s)/What is to be Done? (April 1st)


**IMPORTANT POLICIES**

**Laptop Policy**

The use of laptops and similar devices (tablet computers, smart phones) is solely permitted for read-only documents.

**A Note on Plagiarism**

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. See Scholastic Offences (below) for the link to Scholastic Discipline regulations.

**Plagiarism Checking**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com: [http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)

**Scholastic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

**Accommodation**

Only in exceptional circumstances may a student be provided special accommodation in the completion of a course requirement (i.e., exams, papers). To request a one-time accommodation (brief illness, family emergency), the student should inform the professor when they are able so accommodation can be made. To request other accommodation(s), the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to discuss options. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office.
Completion of Course Requirements

Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall-December 31; Winter-April 30, Summer-August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook: http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html

Mental Health

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness Western for a complete list of options to obtain help: http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. The Wellness Education Centre (lower level UCC) assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs: http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html
Western’s School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies’ Living Well website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html

Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western’s Campus Recreation Centre: http://www.westernmustangs.ca/index.aspx?path=ims#
Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also, we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page http://www.music.uwo.ca/, and our own McIntosh Gallery http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/.

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all members of the Department of Sociology to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- Respect for others both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others’ expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
• Active engagement in learning and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to others; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)

• Personal integrity (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Students should also be aware of the UWO Student Code of Conduct found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf