Course Description

This course provides a critical examination of capitalism’s capacity to shape us as gendered, racialized people. We will review canonical texts by Marx and Engels outlining the contours of capitalism, and then subject those readings of capitalism to feminist and queer critique. In particular we will deal with the division between production and reproduction, the historical shift between Fordist and Post-Fordist forms of capital accumulation, the rise of affective or care labor, and the shifting gendered quality of labor itself.

Work is, for better or for worse, something we will spend a majority of our lives doing. The demand to work informs how we use our time, how we use our bodies, the shape of our desires and aspirations, our relationships with others, and, in a very deep fashion, our senses of self. The goal of this class is to develop a critical understanding of the organization of work under capitalism historically and contemporarily, so that we might better navigate our paths through it.

Obligations

Participation
Black feminist thinker bell hooks talks about using the classroom to create a learning community. This is a community dedicated to transforming everyone in it – teachers and students alike. It is a community that comes together to share new knowledge but also to transform behaviors, to challenge each other, to take risks, to express and address conflict, and to support each other. It is a community that takes trust and work. I want you to think of your participation in this class in terms of responsibility not simply to yourself but to a learning community.

The point of this course is to transform our relationships to labor and to gender. This is a course we are all on – we all have the responsibility and the power to transform ourselves and help in the transformation of others. This transformation will take time, effort, courage, and generosity – the ability to listen, the ability to talk and share, the ability to critically engage with yourself, the texts, and each other generously. Empower yourself to question. Learn to ask better questions. Challenge yourself as much as you challenge others and me.

A few principles for making a learning community:

**Time and Effort** – Participation includes lots of things. First, it includes attendance. Come to class, come to section. Make use of these resources. Second, participation includes preparation. Do the readings ahead of time, come with questions. Do the assignments, let them challenge you, enjoy them.
Courage and Generosity – Take responsibility for the learning community with courage and generosity. This means being aware of how many people have talked and allowing space for everyone to participate. Talk less if you talk a lot, try to talk more if you are shy. Listen to what others say, try to understand where they are coming from. Take risks and be willing to change. We will be touching on some contentious issues in this class. If we encounter conflict, don’t shy away. Trust we can work through it honestly, even if we disagree. Again, be willing to change.

Mindfulness – Much of our engagement with the texts will happen in small, highly structured discussion groups. These groups will be assigned on the first day of class and are intended to foster a more intimate engagement both with the texts and with your classmates. We will practice mindful engagement with ourselves, each other, and the texts of the course. These groups will also serve as the basis for writing review and evaluation.

(1) CLASS EXERCISES (20%): In 6 of our sessions, classes will start or end with a short, 10-minute exercise. These exercises will consist of a question that must be answered in written form (max. ½ page). These exercises will be averaged together for 20% of your final grade. If you do not come to class or if your answer does not reflect any knowledge of the readings, you will receive 0 points.

(2) FILM REVIEWS (40%): Students will be required to write reviews of two of the four films shown in class. Students have 1 week to write this review – the organizing question for the review will be provided by the instructor. The goal of this exercise is to have students apply some of the conceptual tools developed in this class to an “empirical situation.” The film reviews should be 4 pages long (double spaced; approx. 1200 words). They will be averaged together for 40% of the final grade. Please submit them via TritonED.

(3) FINAL PROJECT (40%): For the final project, your group will design and present a Feminist Workers’ Utopia. Drawing insights from works in the class, you will base your utopia on an analysis of the relationship between gender hierarchy and capitalism that then lets you imagine a world in which the relations of production and reproduction actively work to dismantle, rather than reinforce, systems of gender (and other!) oppression. There are two components to this project: a group and an individual one. Your group will prepare a twenty-minute presentation of your utopia; additionally, each person will submit a 750 word statement explaining the group project and how it relates to the readings in the course. More details on the assignment will be given as it approaches. Final presentations will happen during final’s week. Individual papers will be submitted the same day via TritonED.

For every day that assignments are handed in late, 2.5%/calendar day will be subtracted.

Critical Gender Studies at UCSD

This course is cross-listed as a course both in anthropology and critical gender studies. Many students take a Critical Gender Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a university or college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet have no information about the major or minor and don’t realize how
close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. A Critical Gender Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, education, public health, social work, non-profit work and many other careers. If you would like information about the Critical Gender Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Joje Reyes-Alonzo, Critical Gender Studies Program Advisor, via email at cgs@ucsd.edu.

Schedule

The REPRODUCTION of the CONDITIONS of PRODUCTION

September 22:

September 27:

September 29:

October 4:

October 6:

From INDUSTRY to FLEXIBILITY: FORISM and POST-FORDISM

October 11:

October 13:
GLOBALIZATION and SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

October 18:
• FILM: Macquilapolis: City of Factories

October 20:

October 25:

AFFECTIVE LABOR

October 27:
• FILM: Chain of Love

November 1:

November 3:

“THE SIMULTANEITY of OPPRESSION”: Capitalism, Racism, and Patriarchy

November 8:

November 10:
(CRIMINAL) QUEER VALUES

November 15:
• **FILM:** *Mariposas en el Andamio*

November 17:

November 22:

November 24: Thanksgiving Holiday

NEW ECONOMIES, NEW GENDERS, NEW FAMILIES

November 29:
• **FILM:** *American Revolutionary: The Evolution of Grace Lee Boggs.*

December 1:
Further Reading (for your independent enjoyment):

On Marx and Engels

PostFordism

Social Reproduction

Affective labor

Intersectionality

- Nancy Fraser, “Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two-Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice,” in Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism* (Verso 2013), pp. 159-174

**Queer Values**

**Utopias**

**Neoliberalism and Finance**