

Feminist Philosophy of Work (HS 51049)

SoSe 22

Time	Thursdays 12-14 pm
Place:	DOR 24, 1.308
Seminar leader:	Prof. Dr. Mirjam Müller (she, her)
Email:	mirjam.mueller@hu-berlin.de
Office Hours:	Thursday 14-15.30

Outline

“Work” and “the worker” are not neutral categories. Who gets to be a worker, what kind of activities count as work, what type of work people have access to and what working conditions they encounter, crucially depend on aspects like their gender, their race, their age, or their ability among other things. In this class we will look at work from an intersectional feminist perspective and deal with questions such as: which activities count as work and why? What are the normative concerns raised by issues like the gender division of labour, the lack of valuation of care-work or new forms of precarious labour in the gig economy? On which grounds can workers who are differently positioned form solidarity and resist unjust work arrangements? We will discuss these and other questions by drawing on work in Marxist- and socialist-feminist theory, the ethics of care and affective labour, theories of freedom and alienation, and theories of (transnational) solidarity. We will also study specific cases and the issues they raise, including care platforms, automation, transnational supply chains, or global care chains.

Credits

Active participation: to gain credits for active participation you will need to:

1. ***Hand in one response paper:*** Write one short response papers (1-2 pages) that responds to one seminar reading. The response papers should be handed in until **Thursday, 2. June via Moodle**. In the response paper you should focus on *one* aspect/argument of the reading, briefly summarize it, and critically engage with it. Critical engagement can mean different things: for instance, you can develop an objection to the argument, or raise a question about one aspect that is unclear to you or think through some of the implications of the argument.
2. ***Group work on one case study:*** for this task, we will split up the seminar group into small groups (about 5 members). Each group has the task to

pick one of the work practices outlined in the syllabus (or to suggest an alternative one that you might find interesting) and use it as a case study to discuss the philosophical issues raised in the course literature. The outcome of your discussion should be documented in some audio-visual form (poster, video, podcast, Zine...).

Modulabschlussprüfung (MAP):

(1) Graded paper (Hausarbeit):

- Deadline: **Friday 30.09.2022**. Submission via Moodle.
- If you want to write a graded paper (Hausarbeit), you need to hand in a short exposé (1/2 - 1 page) detailing your research question and outline of the paper by **Thursday, 14.07.22**

or

(2) Oral exam (mündliche Prüfung)

- Date: Mid October (please email me to confirm the date)
- 20 min exam that involves: (1) Handing in a 1-2 p outline of a research question + theses, (2) 5 min presentation, (3) questions on the outline and presentation

Moodle: the use of Moodle is absolutely essential. You will find all the readings there, and you will need to upload your essays to Moodle.

Special circumstances: If you find yourself in a situation which makes it difficult for you to participate (e.g. care responsibilities, sickness...), please contact me!

Topics and Readings	
21.04.2 2	Introduction to the class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Class organization/Credits - Intro to the topic - Seminar outline
Part One. Work and the Worker	
28.04.2 2	What is work? <u>Required reading:</u> Gürtler, Sabine. 2005. "The Ethical Dimension of Work: A Feminist Perspective." <i>Hypatia</i> 20(2): 119–34. <u>Recommended reading:</u>

	<p>Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2021. "The Philosophy of Work". In <i>Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy Volume 7</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.</p>
05.05.2 2	<p>Who is a worker?</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u> James, Selma. 1974. "Sex, Race and Class". In James, Selma. 2012. <i>Sex Race and Class: The Perspective of Winning</i>. Oakland, CA: PM Press, pp. 92-102.</p> <p><u>Recommended reading:</u> Smith, Molly/Mac, Juno. 2020. <i>Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers Rights</i>. London: Verso, Chapter 2: Work, 40-56.</p>
12.05.2 2	<p>Affective labour</p> <p><u>Required reading</u> Oksala, Johanna. 2016. "Affective Labor and Feminist Politics." <i>Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</i> 41(2): 281–303.</p> <p><u>Recommended reading</u> Gutierrez-Rodriguez, Encarnacion. 2014. "Domestic Work–Affective Labor: On Feminization and the Coloniality of Labor." 46: 45–53.</p>
Part Two. The Problems With Work	
19.05.2 2	<p>Gendered labour and global exploitation</p> <p><u>Required reading</u> McKeown, Maeve. 2017. "Sweatshop Labour as Global Structural Exploitation." In <i>Exploitation: From Practice to Theory</i>, Studies in social and global justice, eds. Monique Deveaux and Vida Panitch. London ; Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield International.</p> <p><u>Recommended reading</u> Weir, Allison. 2008. "Global Care Chains: Freedom, Responsibility, and Solidarity". <i>The Southern Journal of Philosophy</i>, 46: 166-175.</p> <p>→ Case Study: <i>Global Care Chains</i></p>
02.06.2 2	<p>Exploitation and Expropriation</p>

	<p><u>Required reading</u> Fraser, Nancy. 2016. "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson." <i>Critical Historical Studies</i> 3(1): 163–78.</p> <p><u>Recommended reading</u> Federici, Silvia. 2019. <i>Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons</i>. Oakland: PM Press, Ch.1 "On Primitive Accumulation, Globalization and Reproduction (pp. 15-26), Ch. 2 "Introduction to the New Enclosures" (pp.26-34).</p> <p>→ Case Study: Prison labour</p>
09.06.2 2	<p>Precarity, platform labour and the gig-economy</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u> van Doorn, Niels. 2017. "Platform Labor: On the Gendered and Racialized Exploitation of Low-Income Service Work in the 'on-Demand' Economy." <i>Information, Communication & Society</i> 20(6): 898–914.</p> <p><u>Recommended reading</u> Ticona, Julia, and Alexandra Mateescu. 2018. "Trusted Strangers: Carework Platforms' Cultural Entrepreneurship in the on-Demand Economy." <i>New Media & Society</i> 20(11): 4384–4404.</p> <p>Cobble, Dorothy Sue. 2010. „More Intimate Labor Unions“. In <i>Intimate labors: Cultures, technologies, and the politics of care</i>, edt. Eileen Boris and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, 280–95.</p> <p>→ Case Study: Care Platforms</p>
Part Three. Transformations	
16.06.2 2	<p>Automation and Technology</p> <p><u>Required reading</u> Hester, Helen/Srnicke, Nick. 2020. "Love's Labours Lost: Post-Work and Social Reproduction," <i>Electra</i> 10.</p> <p>Hester, Helen. 2016. "Technically Female: Women, Machines, and Hyperemployment", in https://salvage.zone/technically-female-women-machines-and-hyperemployment/.</p> <p><u>Recommended reading</u></p>

	<p>Lewis, Sophie. 2019. <i>Full Surrogacy Now. Feminism Against Family</i>. London: Verso, "Introduction".</p> <p>→ <i>Case Study: Care Robots</i></p>
23.06.2 2	<p>Socialization of (Care-)work</p> <p><u>Required reading</u></p> <p>Forrester, Katrina. 2022. "Feminist Demands and the Problem of Housework." <i>American Political Science Review</i>: 1–15.</p> <p><u>Recommended reading:</u></p> <p>Davis, Angela. 1983. <i>Women, Race and Class</i>. New York: Vintage Books, Ch. 13 "The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework" (pp. 222-245).</p>
30.06.2 2	<p>Post-work</p> <p><u>Required reading:</u></p> <p>Weeks, Kathi. 2011. <i>The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics and Postwork Imaginaries</i>. Durham and London: Duke University Press; Ch. 3 "Working demands: From Wages for Housework to Basic Income" (pp. 113-151).</p> <p><u>Recommended reading:</u></p> <p>Scrnicec, Nick/Williams, Alex. 2015. <i>Inventing the Future. Postcapitalism and a World Without Work</i>. London: Verso, Ch. 6 "Post-Work Imaginaries" (pp. 107-129).</p>
07.07.2 2	<p>NO CLASS! (possibly, alternative evening event, TBC)</p>
14.07.2 2	<p>The feminist strike and collective bargaining</p> <p><u>Required reading</u></p> <p>Ferguson, Susan. 2020. <i>Women and Work. Feminism, Labour and Social Reproduction</i>. London: Pluto Press, Ch. 8 "The Social Reproduction Strike (pp. 120-140).</p> <p>Gago, Verónica. 2020. <i>Feminist International. How to Change Everything</i>. London: Verso, Ch. 1 "#WeStrike: Towards a Political Theory of the Feminist Strike".</p>

	<p><u>Recommended reading:</u></p> <p>Horgan, Amelia. 2021. Lost in Work. Escaping Capitalism. London: Pluto Press, Ch. 9 "Time off. Resistance to Work" (pp. 145-161).</p> <p>Arruzza, Cinzia/ Bhattacharya, Tithi/ Fraser, Nancy. 2019. <i>Feminism for the 99%. A Manifesto</i>. London: Verso.</p>
Conclusion	
21.07.2 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Discussion • MAPs