

**Sociology 190 (Fall 2015). Absolutely Surplus: Social Exclusion in Contemporary Sociology.**

**Mondays, 2-4 pm, 321 Haviland.**

**Instructor: Zachary Levenson, Department of Sociology.**

**Office hours: Mondays 10-12, location TBD.**

Contemporary sociology abounds with studies of social exclusion. From 1970s debates over *marginality* and *informality* to the revival of these concepts in the early 2000s; from the *underclass* debates of the 1980s and 90s to the rehabilitation of Marxian concepts like *surplus population* in current work; and above all, the recent return of debates over the rise of the *precariat* and *social death*, the last forty years of Anglo-American sociology have largely been characterized by attempts to understand processes of social exclusion on domestic and global scales. Beyond the division of the social body into classes, groups, castes, and the like, social exclusion captures the phenomenon of being society's remainder. In late twentieth century and contemporary sociological research, a repertoire of concepts has definitively emerged to capture this phenomenon. Yet rarely are these emergent conceptualizations treated in relation to the longstanding traditions of thinking through social exclusion that characterized classical social theory.

In this course, we will begin with a rigorous examination of the genesis of theories of exclusion, from Malthus and Hegel through Marx, ultimately working through the concept of "surplus populations" developed in *Capital*. We will then turn to biopolitical theories of exclusion, from Arendt and Foucault through Agamben and Mbembe, investigating how government itself is predicated upon a division into worthy subjects of civil society and those excluded from its realm. After thinking through the relationship between political-economic and biopolitical theories of social exclusion, we will examine contemporary sociological studies of exclusion. Our goal will be to assess the adequacy of sociological formulations in relation to these social theoretical traditions. How should we understand one in relation to the other? What do ethnographies and other empirical studies of social exclusion bring to bear upon theory, and vice versa?

**Required texts:** All course materials will be available as free, downloadable PDFs on bCourses ([bcourses.berkeley.edu](https://bcourses.berkeley.edu)). However, we will be reading substantial portions of quite a few books on the syllabus, and so you may choose to purchase them if you'd prefer.

**Grading:** Participation (40 percent) + research paper (60 percent). In addition to discussing the readings on this syllabus, each student will be expected to produce a 12-15 page research paper on social exclusion, arguing for the use of the concept of their choice in a specific case study. We will be working on these over the course of the semester; this is not a project that can be pulled off during R&R week. Everyone is required to submit a research proposal by the fourth week of classes (5 percent), an abstract by the sixth week (5 percent), a literature review by the ninth week

(10 percent), and a detailed outline by the end of the twelfth week (10 percent). Papers will be due on December 11 (25 percent). In addition, the final meeting will be entirely devoted to students presenting their research to the class in a mini-conference, organized into a series of thematic panels (5 percent).

Your participation grade will be determined by general participation in the seminar (30 percent) + reading presentations over the course of the semester (10 percent: 5 percent X 2). Each student will be required to present twice: once as a proponent of a reading, and once as a critic. As a proponent, you should work to extract a central thesis from the text. What is the author arguing? All too often, writers will bury their arguments, either leaving them implicit, or else not presenting them systematically. It is your task to excavate the key thesis of the text, presenting it succinctly and forcefully. After doing so, lay out the evidence the author provides to substantiate her argument. Provide as much textual evidence as you can to support your reading, but please don't simply read out a series of block quotes. This should be *your* reading of the text. Your presentation as a proponent should be 5-8 minutes.

As a critic, you should preemptively figure out what the author's central thesis is and systematically work to refute it. This could include pointing to a disjuncture between the argument and the evidence the author uses to support it; insufficient evidence; logical flaws; limitations of the argument in the context of existing scholarship; misuse of concepts; or something else entirely. Please be as thorough as possible. Critical presentations should be roughly 5 minutes.

### **Week 1(August 31): Surplus to What?**

Sassen, Saskia. 2014. Pp. 1-11 in *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Denning, Michael. 2010. "Wageless Life." *New Left Review* 66: 79-97.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. Pp. 1-62 in *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts*. Cambridge: Polity.

### **Week 2 (September 14): Scarcity and the Rabble**

Malthus, Thomas Robert. 1970. Pp. 67-80 in *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, edited by Anthony Flew. London: Pelican.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1991. Pp. xix-xxii, 264-72, 339-42. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, edited by Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ruda, Frank. 2013. Pp. 10-48 in *Hegel's Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. London: Bloomsbury.

### **Week 3 (September 21): Capital's Detritus**

Marx, Karl. 1970. Pp. 139-42 in *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right,'* edited by Joseph O'Malley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marx, Karl. 1976. Pp. 762-802 in *Capital Volume I*. New York: Penguin.

*Optional:* Benanav, Aaron and John Clegg. 2011. "Misery and Debt: On the Logic and History of Surplus Populations and Surplus Capital." *Endnotes* 2.

### **Week 4 (September 28): Choosing Who Will Live and Who Will Die**

#### ***RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE!***

Foucault, Michel. 1978. "Right of Death and Power over Life." Pp. 133-59 in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction. Volume I*. New York: Vintage.

Mbembe, Achille. 2003. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15(1):11-40.

*Optional:* Lemke, Thomas. 2011. Pp. 33-52 in *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*. New York: New York University Press.

*Optional:* Cacho, Lisa Marie. 2012. "Grafting Terror onto Illegality." Pp. 97-113 in *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. New York: New York University Press.

### **Week 5 (October 5): The Politicization of Life**

Arendt, Hannah. 2013. Pp. 82-133 in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, edited by Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze. Durham: Duke University Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. Pp. 119-43 in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

*Optional:* Lemke, Thomas. 2011. Pp. 53-64 in *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*. New York: New York University Press.

### **Week 6 (October 12): Underclass**

#### ***ABSTRACT DUE!***

\*Wilson, William Julius. 1987. Pp. 3-62 in *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Cambridge: Harvard.

Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. 1993. Pp. 115-85 in *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard.

Katz, Michael B. 1993. "The Urban 'Underclass' as a Metaphor of Social Transformation." Pp. 3-23 in *The "Underclass" Debate: Views from History*, edited by Michael B. Katz. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### **Week 7 (October 19): Marginality Then...**

\*Perlman, Janice. 1976. Pp. 91-191 in *The Myth of Marginality: Urban Poverty and Politics in Rio de Janeiro*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Portes, Alejandro. 1972. "Rationality in the Slum: An Essay on Interpretive Sociology." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14(3): 268-86.

Safa, Helen. 1970. "The Poor are Like Everyone Else, Oscar." *Psychology Today* 4(4): 26-32.

### **Week 8 (October 26): ...and Marginality Again**

\*Wacquant, Loïc. 2008. Pp. 1-12, 41-91, 227-79 in *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Cambridge: Polity.

Caldeira, Teresa P. R. 2009. "Marginality Again?!" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33(3): 848-53.

### **Week 9 (November 2): What Is Informality?**

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW DUE!**

\*Breman, Jan. 1996. Pp. 1-23, 109-76, 222-64 in *Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moser, Caroline O. N. 1994. "The Informal Sector Debate, Part 1: 1970-1983." Pp. 11-30 in *Contrapunto: The Informal Sector Debate in Latin America*, edited by Cathy A. Rakowski. Albany: SUNY Press.

Rakowski, Cathy A. 1994. "The Informal Sector Debate, Part 2: 1984-1993." Pp. 31-50 in *Contrapunto: The Informal Sector Debate in Latin America*, edited by Cathy A. Rakowski. Albany: SUNY Press.

### ***Further Reading:***

Breman, Jan. 2015. "Interview: A Footloose Scholar." *New Left Review* 94:45-75.

AlSayyad, Nezar. 2004. "Urban Informality as a 'New' Way of Life." Pp. 7-32 in ***Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia***, edited by Ananya Roy and Nezar AlSayyad. Oxford: Lexington.

Bayat, Asef. 2004. "Globalization and the Politics of the Informals in the Global South." Pp. 79-102 in ***Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia***, edited by Ananya Roy and Nezar AlSayyad. Oxford: Lexington.

Quijano Obregón, Anibal. 1980. "The Marginal Pole of the Economy and the Marginalised Labour Force." Pp. 254-88 in ***The Articulation of Modes of Production***, edited by Harold Wolpe. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

### **Week 10 (November 9): The Politics of Informality**

\*Agarwala, Rina. 2013. Pp. 1-69, 189-206 in ***Informal Labor, Formal Politics, and Dignified Discontent in India***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lindell, Ilda. 2010. "The Changing Politics of Informality: Collective Organizing, Alliances, and Scales of Engagement." Pp. 1-30 in ***Africa's Informal Workers: Collective Agency, Alliances, and Transnational Organizing in Urban Africa***, edited by Ilda Lindell. London: Zed.

### **Week 11 (November 16): Precarity**

\*Standing, Guy. 2011. Pp. 1-89 in ***The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class***. London: Bloomsbury.

Barchiesi, Franco. 2011. Pp. 1-25, 165-208 in ***Precarious Liberation: Workers, the State, and Contested Social Citizenship in Postapartheid South Africa***. Albany: SUNY Press.

Breman, Jan. 2013. "A Bogus Concept?" *New Left Review* 84:130-8.

### ***Further Reading:***

Allison, Anne. 2013. ***Precarious Japan***. Durham: Duke University Press.

Weeks, Kathi. 2011. ***The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries***. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ross, Andrew. 2010. *Nice Work if You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times*. New York: New York University Press.

Milkman, Ruth and Ed Ott (eds.). 2014. *New Labor in New York: Precarious Workers and the Future of the Labor Movement*. Ithaca: ILR Press.

Lorey, Isabell. 2015. *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious*. Translated by Aileen Derieg. New York: Verso.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. 2009. Pp. 146-7, 244-8 in *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

## **Week 12 (November 23): Surplus Humanity**

### ***DETAILED OUTLINE DUE!***

\*Rajan, Kaushik Sunder. 2005. "Subjects of Speculation: Emergent Life Sciences and Market Logics in the United States and India." *American Anthropologist* 107(1):19-30.

\*Rajan, Kaushik Sunder. 2007. "Experimental Values: Indian Clinical Trials and Surplus Health." *New Left Review* 45:67-88.

Yates, Michelle. 2011. "The Human-as-Waste, the Labor Theory of Value, and Disposability in Contemporary Capitalism." *Antipode* 43(5):1679-95.

McIntyre, Michael. 2011. "Race, Surplus Population, and the Marxist Theory of Imperialism." *Antipode* 43(5):1489-1515

### ***Further reading:***

Davis, Mike. 2006. *Planet of Slums*. New York: Verso.

Rajan, Kaushik Sunder. 2006. *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Cooper, Melinda. 2008. *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2002. "Commodity Fetishism in Organs Trafficking." Pp. 31-62 in *Commodifying Bodies*, edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Loïc Wacquant. London: Sage.

## **Week 13 (November 30): Illegality, Stigma, Abjection**

\*Kotiswaran, Prabha. 2012. Pp. 1-84 in *Dangerous Sex, Invisible Labor: Sex Work and the Law in India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fortunati, Leopoldina. 1995 [1981]. Pp.27-47 in *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*. Translated by Hillary Creek. Brooklyn: Autonomedia.

Pheterson, Gail. 1993. "The Whore Stigma: Female Dishonor and Male Unworthiness." *Social Text* 37:39-64.

Grant, Melissa Gira. 2014. "The Stigma." Pp. 74-82 in *Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work*. New York: Verso.

### ***Further reading:***

Berg, Heather. 2014. "Working for Love, Loving for Work: Discourses of Labor in Feminist Sex-Work Activism." *Feminist Studies* 40(3):693-721.

Vijayakumar, Gowri. 2015. "'There Was an Uproar': Reading the Arcane of Reproduction through Sex Work in India." *Viewpoint* 5.

Gall, Gregor. 2012. *An Agency of Their Own: Sex Worker Union Organising*. Alresford: Zero.

Kristeva, Julia. 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Weitzer, Ronald. 2009. "Sociology of Sex Work." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35:213-34.

### **Week 14 (December 7): Social Death**

\*Patterson, Orlando. 1982. Pp. 17-101 in *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge: Harvard.

Price, Joshua M. 2015. Pp.22-58 in *Prison and Social Death*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

### ***Further Reading:***

Cacho, Lisa Marie. 2012. *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. New York: New York University Press.

Guenther, Lisa. 2013. *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and Its Afterlives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hartman, Saidiya V. 1997. "Redressing the Pained Body: Toward a Theory of Practice." Pp. 49-78 in *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilderson, Frank B., III. 2010. "The Narcissistic Slave." Pp. 54-91 in *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham: Duke University Press.

**Mini-conference (December 11)**

***PAPER DUE!***