

## **Economics BC 3063: Senior Seminar**

### **Work**

#### **Fall 2007**

Barnard College, Columbia University

Wednesdays, 410-6 p.m.,

Prof. Sanjay Reddy

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Office Hours: Mondays 2 - 330 p.m. (unless otherwise announced).

#### **Course Description:**

We will examine work from the point of view of the following questions:

- (1) What is the understanding of work in economics and is it convincing?
- (2) How has work changed over time and how does it differ across contexts?
- (3) How should work be organized? What are the practical and moral considerations that should enter in answering this question?
- (4) What are the possible futures of work?

#### **Course Requirements:**

The requirements for the course are active and informed class participation and a final research paper on a topic to be chosen by the student in conjunction with the instructor (indicative length of 15-20 pages), which must also be presented to the class. A one page proposal regarding the topic of the final research paper will be due by Wednesday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> and the paper will be due in final form on Wednesday, December the Fifth. The instructor will not be able to read advance drafts of the paper, but will offer informal guidance as required. Fifty percent of the course grade will be composed of the final research paper grade and fifty percent by a grade for diligence and class participation (with an accent on quality rather than quantity).

Students with alternative proposals as to how they should be assessed are encouraged to raise them with the instructor. This must be done at the beginning of the course. Any serious proposal will be considered.

The readings will all be made available on the course website, via Courseworks. The list below is merely indicative, and is subject to changes.

### **Course Structure:**

#### **(I) Course Introduction**

**September 5**

#### **(II) What is the economic understanding of work and is it convincing?**

**September 12:**

Selection from Ehrenberg and Smith, *Modern Labor Economics*

Selection from Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*

David. M. Kreps, “Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Incentives”, *American Economic Review*, May 1997.

**September 19th:**

Amartya Sen, “Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioural Foundations of Economic Theory”. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Summer 1977, no. 6

Amartya Sen, *On Ethics and Economics*, selection.

Michael J. Piore, *Beyond Individualism*, selection.

**(III) How has work changed over time and how does it differ across contexts?**

**September 26th: Work in historical and contemporary comparison - I**

E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism"

Maurice Godelier, *The Making of Great Men*, selection

Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do?"

**October 3rd: Work in historical and contemporary comparison - 2**

Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra*, selection

Lydia Potts, *The World Labor Market: A History of Migration*, selection

George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, chapter 2

**October 10th: Work in the United States - 1**

Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, selection

Studs Terkel, *Working*, selection

Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*, selection

**October 17th: Work in the United States -2**

Brennan Center for Justice report on "Unregulated Work in the Global City", selection

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nicked and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*, selection

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream*, selection

Sudhir A. Venkatesh, *Off the Books: The Underground Economy of the Urban Poor*, Harvard University Press, 2006

Alexandra K. Murphy and Sudhir A. Venkatesh, "Vice Careers: The changing contours of sex work in New York City," Forthcoming in *Qualitative Sociology*, June 2006

**(IV) How should work be organized? What are the practical and moral considerations that should enter in answering this question?**

**October 24th:**

Alchian, A. and H. Demsetz, "Production, Information costs and Economic Organization," *American Economic Review* 62: 777-795."

G.A. Cohen, "Why Do Workers Take Hazardous Jobs?"

**October 30th:**

David Ellerman, *Property and Contract in Economics*, selection.

Waheed Hussain, "Democratic Capitalism and Respect for the Value of Freedom"

Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*, selection.

Elizabeth Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics*, selection.

**(V) What are the possible futures of work?**

**November 7th:**

Gregory K. Dow, *Governing the Firm: Workers' Control in Theory and Practice*, selection

Selection on Mondragon cooperatives

**November 14th:**

Andre Gorz, *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-Based Society*, selection

Philippe van Parijs, *Real Freedom for All*, selection

Roberto Managbeira Unger, *What Should Legal Analysis Become?*, selection

**Research Paper Presentations**

**November 28th**

**December 5th:**