

Questions of Labour in the Expanded Field of Art & Curating

General Info

The course introduces central art-relevant theories around work, labour, the (political) economy, and financialization from various perspectives, for example, post-Frankfurt school, Feminist, and recent contemporary speculative analyses. These theories intersect with discussions on technology, computation and contemporary financial instruments and their impact on artistic/curatorial labour, epistemologies, and ways of working. The course will also address how various forms of activism have taken up the question of labour in connection to the expanded field of art and curating. Course participants will grasp how labour stands as one of the most pivotal and formative concerns within the history, present, and future of artistic practice and curating. They will understand how artistic/curatorial labour has been theorised and reflected on in relation to the economy and its historical transformations. Most importantly, this course will help those partaking in it better situate the labour they perform within the multiple dynamics of a wider socio-economic framework.

"Questions of Labour" is a theory-centred course because theory is necessary to unpack what labour and work mean for art workers in general in a contemporary socio-economic context. However, it has been set up with the view to minimizing the amount of reading required by you. Each session will start with a lecture in which things are explained as clearly as possible and opened-up for your questions and further clarifications. Each session looks at labour from a different critical angle by describing a particular socio-economic context or general condition that shapes or is strongly connected to our artistic/creative labour today. One can think of these as five major themes, each session will thoroughly address one of these. The themes are: The Entrepreneur, Post-Fordist Economy, Automation, Financialization, and Sleep. The sixth session will be dedicated to the presentation and discussion of end of course assignments.



Assignments

The course features two types of assignments:

Individual quick/short weekly assignments: at the end of each session a straightforward question related to the session's theme will be posted on MyCourses. You are kindly required to respond to these questions with a short paragraph, a found image, a photo, a drawing, a conceptual statement, a comic strip, a collage etc. Please try to 'answer' the question(s) with whichever medium you choose within a week and before the following session. The idea is that through these weekly assignments we can generate content that might end up in the group assignment or feed into it indirectly.

Group Assignment at end of course: last year's participants developed an excellent small publication that featured some of the weekly assignments, some contributions by guests and other interventions. Although it was rewarding and exciting, it might not be the best option for time, since the publication has only recently been released. Alternatives might be the production of short videos or even .gifs, or a blog documenting weekly assignments + other interventions, making a series of podcasts, or now that we have more possibility for interaction, developing interventions outside of the confinements of a gallery situation and documenting them. During the first two sessions we will dedicate some time to forming different groups and deciding on a plan for how to move forward with an uncomplicated low-budget curatorial production.



Schedule and Zoom Link to Sessions

✳ **All sessions will take place via the Zoom link [Here](#)**

FRIDAY 5 NOV.

The Entrepreneur (a Critical Perspective) + Course General Run-Through

09.30 – 12.00 [+20 min. break in the middle] Lecture

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 Discussion and Coursework

FRIDAY 12 NOV.

Art, Work and Value in the post-Fordist Economy

09.30 – 12.00 [+20 min. break in the middle] Lecture

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 Discussion and Coursework

FRIDAY 19 NOV.

Automation Theory

09.30 – 12.00 [+20 min. break in the middle] Lecture

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 Session with Guest Speaker and Discussion

FRIDAY 26 NOV.

Financialization

09.30 – 12.00 [+20 min. break in the middle] Lecture

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 Session with Guest Speaker and Discussion

FRIDAY 3 DEC.

Sleep

09.30 – 12.00 [+20 min. break in the middle] Lecture

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 Discussion and Coursework

FRIDAY 10 DEC.

Group assignment presentation and discussion

09.30 – 12.00 [+20 - 30 min. break in the middle]

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 Continuation



Questions of Labour in the Extended Field of Art and Curating **Primary Resource List**

The following list comprises the main books, essays and articles that will be referenced and used during the course, they are not required reading prior to course sessions but will come in handy when developing your assignments. Other texts and materials might be mentioned during lectures and discussions, these will be put up when and if this occurs. The entire 'Questions of Labour in the Extended Field of Art and Curating Primary Resource List' can be downloaded on the MyCourses webpage as a Zip-folder.

- Michel Foucault, The Birth of Biopolitics lecture series at the Collège de France between 1978 and 1979, 2008, Palgrave MacMillan
- Ulrich Bröckling, The Entrepreneurial Self: Fabricating a New Type of Subject, 2016, SAGE
- Michel Feher, Self-Appreciation; or, The Aspirations of Human Capital, Public Culture, 2009, 21 (1): 21–41
- Michel Feher, Rated Agency: Investee Politics in a Speculative Age, 2018, Zone Books
- Silvio Lorusso, ENTREPRECARIAT, ONOMATOPEE 170, May 11 - Jun 23, 2019
- Paolo Gerbaudo, The Great Recoil: Politics after Populism and Pandemic, 2021, Verso
- Bojana Kunst, Artist at Work: Proximity of Art and Capitalism, 2015, Zero Books
- Danielle Child, Working Aesthetics: Labour, Art and Capitalism, 2019, Bloomsbury
- Danielle Child, Artistic Economies: Shelter, Food and Clothing, 2020, Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry
- Deborah Lupton, The Quantified Self, 2016, Wiley
- Joshua B. Freeman, Behemoth: A History of the Factory and the Making of the Modern World, 2018, Norton
- Matthew Poole, 'Speculation, presumption, and assumption: The ideology of algebraic-to-parametric workspace' in: The Politics of Parametricism Digital Technologies in Architecture, Manuel Shvartzberg and Matthew Poole (eds.), 2015, Bloomsbury
- Astra Taylor, The Automation Charade, Logic Magazine, Issue 5 – Failure, 2018: <https://logicismag.io/failure/the-automation-charade/>
- Aaron Benanav, Automation and the Future of Work, 2020, Verso
- Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, Inventing the Future Postcapitalism and a World Without Work, 2015, Verso
- Helen Hester, Care under capitalism: The crisis of “women's work”, 2018, Progressive Review, Wiley: IPPR Progressive Review, Volume 24, Issue 4: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/newe.12074>
- Emily Rosamond, Shared stakes, distributed investment: Socially engaged art and the financialization of social impact, Finance and Society, 2016, 2(2):111
- Johnathan Crary, 24/7 Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep, 2014, Verso
- Magnus Eriksson and Geraldine Juárez, The Biopolitics of Melanopic Illuminance, 2017, Scapegoat Journal Issue 10: Night: <http://www.scapegoatjournal.org/docs/10/14.pdf>
- Matthew Fuller, Melnikov's Promethean Sleepers in: How to Sleep: The Art, Biology and Culture of Unconsciousness, 2018, Bloomsbury
- Shu Lea Cheang and Matthew Fuller, Sleep Series: 'art by sleepers, for sleepers and art as sleep', 2021, Unpublished Text

