

CGS 3530F Ungovernable Life  
Centre for Global Studies  
Huron University College  
Dr. Wendy Russell  
Tuesdays 12:30-2:30, Thursdays 12:30-1:30 – HUC W116

Prerequisite(s): 0.5 course from Centre for Global Studies 1000-1999, or permission of the Centre for Global Studies.

Office: V128  
email: [wrussell@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:wrussell@huron.uwo.ca)

Phone: 519-438-7224 ext 226  
Office hours: Thursday 2:00-4:00 and  
Friday by appointment

### Introduction

Critical investigations into ways in which social life and formations of community are irreducible to correlative orders of governance/anarchy and how these forms of living exceed, exist beyond, and are indifferent to politics. Emphasis is placed on studying immediate social affirmations of life in the world, expressive of the unpolitical. In this year's session of the course, we will examine how the notion of 'social reproduction' as it is most currently used is a useful tool for finding this space for 'ungovernable life'. We will be testing this notion of social reproduction a bit, following along with your professor's own fitful (fretful?) relationship with this idea. Does it really help? Are there better framings than 'social reproduction'? Are there worse framings? Is it helpful to understand resistance within the space of social reproduction? In the context of this course, and its specific concern, we're asking the question: at this moment in time, is social reproduction inevitably a site of resistance? Our tentative 'thesis' for the course is this: does the hegemony of neoliberalism create conditions that make day-to-day life increasingly ungovernable for those most disadvantaged by the operation of globalized capitalism?

### Course Learning Objectives

If you are distressed that this course is an exploration and does not promise the delivery of a fully cooked and falsely authoritative account of a topic, take a deep breath along with me. Calm blue ocean. You are an interdisciplinary scholar with advanced skills in reading and analysis. You are an interdisciplinary scholar developing those skills of bringing tools to problems. You are an interdisciplinary scholar learning the results of bordering knowledge about complexity within disciplinary frames. You are an interdisciplinary scholar acutely aware of the value of advancing your understanding of complexity in your own experience. You are an interdisciplinary scholar who appreciates that responsible scholarship begins from openness to ideas, experiences, knowledge and issues that are not your own. This course will exercise your skills as an interdisciplinary scholar, challenging you to read things that immediately draw you in and things that you struggle with. This course will exercise your skills to bring ideas together using a single analytic frame. This course will exercise your ability to test ideas against detailed case studies.

## Course Methods

Our class meetings will be made up of lectures, films, and discussions. Lectures and films will supplement course reading, and so **being prepared for class by having done the reading is important**. Content covered in our class meetings will be helpful for completing written assignments.

## Required Readings

Most of our course readings are available through the Western Libraries' holding of on-line scholarly journals. A few will be available via the author's professional websites, and I'll tell you which ones those are. And, finally, a few will be on reserve in the Huron library. I'll let you know.

## Evaluation

- Case Study Bibliography 20% (due October 18 in class)
- Outline (with sources identified for each theme of your paper) 15% (due November 8 in class)
- Case Study 35% (due December 6)
- Final Take Home Exam 30% (due December 13 in my office before 3:00 p.m.)

## Assignments

You have two major assignments: a case study and a final take home essay exam.

Your *Case Study* is an 8-10 page (2000-1250 words) essay based on an extended study of one of the cases we are examining in class, or a case of your own choosing, approved by your professor. Each case study will examine how resistance and alternatives to globalized capitalist hegemony are modelled in the functions of social reproduction. Your paper will draw on our core theoretical readings (from roughly the first month of class) so read those carefully and make sure you understand them before you begin to research your case. These works will help you make your case that you are looking at 'social reproduction'.

The variety of case topics is truly extraordinary, and I am happy to help you refine your topic and question. You can begin by reviewing the cases we are covering in class (see our reading list below), or by identifying a specific kind of practice that supports social reproduction (like 'urban agriculture' or 'informal enterprise' or 'land-based subsistence' or 'land invasions') that interests you. A successful choice will be one that interests you, and that there is enough literature about.

Once you have found a specific place, practice or movement you are interested in is to then use the online databases via the library. The best ones to start with are:

- ProQuest Sociological Abstracts
- ProQuest Sociology Collection
- Anthropology Plus
- Gender Studies Data Base
- PRISMA

Your *Case Study Bibliography* is the tentative list of materials you have gathered to base your case study on, and it should include a brief statement that identifies the case you are looking at. As usual, this bibliography should draw heavily on scholarly sources, especially journals and chapters in books, and at minimum should include 20 items that are specifically relevant, as current as possible, and demonstrate that you can use them to prepare your case with a focus on social reproduction and resistance. I may poach (with credit) items from your lists to assign to class. Three cheers for collaboration and sharing! We are in this together!

Your *Case Study Outline* will be a standard essay outline, presented ideally as a set of statements about what each paragraph in your case study will address, each supported by a list of the sources you will use to support these assertions in your final project. Each outline will need to address how the case you have selected is one of resistance to globalized capitalist hegemony, identify how social reproduction figures in that resistance, and describe how these actions model an alternative way of living and being. I will post more about this on OWL and we will talk about it in class.

Please follow these basic guidelines in presenting your work: print **single sided**, in 12pt font, double spaced, on paper. Please endeavor to use Chicago Author/Date in-text citations for these papers. (Less subtly, **do not use endnotes or footnotes, please, I beg of you**, insert begging emoji).

### *Final Take Home Exam*

Detailed instructions for this final paper will be published on OWL. This final paper should be 5-6 pages (1250-1500 words).

Overall, this paper will ask you to consider the idea that social reproduction is a space of inevitable resistance and production of alternatives in the context of globalized neoliberal capitalist hegemony. The final paper asks you to consider this in light of and in reference to the readings assembled for this course. You may include reference to your own case study, but this paper should demonstrate that you can frame a large group of the cases we have brought together in relation to each other in light of the core concern of this course, ungovernable life.

### Reading Schedule

#### **September 6** Introduction

#### **September 11-13** Social Reproduction Theory and Ungovernability

*This first week is dedicated to understanding social reproduction as a space of action and production. Our goal this week is to press the idea of SR to its limit, and beyond... what is 'wrong' with SRT and, yet, why is it exactly what we need to know how to account for to understand the world as it is today?*

Reading: Bhattacharya, Tithi. 2017. Introduction: Mapping Social Reproduction Theory. In *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*, pp 1-20. London: Pluto Press. (on 2-hour reserve in Huron's library)

Selections (TBA in class) from Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. 2017. *Assembly*. London: Oxford University Press. (conveniently available in pdf form here: <https://construcciondeidentidades.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/heretical-thought-michael-hardt-antonio-negri-assembly-oxford-university-press-2017.pdf>)

**September 18-20** Governance in the Sphere of Social Reproduction: A Colonial Project

*This week and next are dedicated to a) learning how to spot how the space of social reproduction is subjected to analysis and b) seeing an expert examination of how the space of social reproduction can be a site of oppression. The work we read here demonstrates that under modernity social reproduction is vulnerable to normative prescriptions (and proscriptions) enforced in very material violence. To put this another way: social reproduction is brought under the authority of powerful actors who use astonishing violence to tell people how to live, and how not to live. And people resist.*

Reading: Carter, Sarah. 2007. We Must Farm to Enable us to Live: The Plains Cree in Agriculture to 1900. (on OWL in pdf format)

Selection from Carter, Sarah. 2016. *Imperial Plots: Women, Land, and the Spadework of British Colonialism on the Canadian Prairies*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press. (on 2-hour reserve in Huron's library)

**September 25-27** Governance in the Sphere of Social Reproduction: A Capitalist Project

*This week we continue to study how social reproduction is brought under analysis. Our specific concern this week is with how capitalism 'naturally' (well, not so much, see last week's readings) integrates the space of social reproduction. We're going to tackle the idea of 'formal' and 'real' subsumption of social reproduction this week. Buckle up.*

Reading: Mohandesi, Salar and Emma Teitelman. 2017. Without Reserves. In *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression*, pp. 37-67. London: Pluto Press. (on 2-hour reserve in Huron's library)

Ye, Jingzhong and Congzhi He, Juan Liu, Weijing Wang & Shidong Chen. 2017. Left-Behind Elderly: Shouldering A Disproportionate Share of Production and Reproduction in Supporting China's Industrial Development. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44:5, 971-999.

**October 2-4** Theorising Social Reproduction Against Colonial and Capitalist Authority

*And, finally, this week we are back to theorising social reproduction as a space that is not productive of consent and compliance with oppression. It's a site of struggle, contest and disagreement. Whew. We made it.*

Reading: Federici, Silvia. 2004. Women, Land-Struggles and Globalization: An International Perspective. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 39(1-2): 47-62.

Hall, Rebecca Jane. 2016. Reproduction and Resistance: An Anti-colonial Contribution to Social-Reproduction Feminism. *Historical Materialism*, 24(2): 87-110.

Villeda, Suyapa G. Portillo. 2016. Organizing Resistance in Honduras. *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 48(3): 213-216.

### **October 9-11** Fall Reading Break

From this point in the course, I will assign readings each week largely from the list of readings (see below). What follows directly here is a list of weekly topics that we will cover in class. Thus, for each of these weeks, the readings are ‘TBA’ and I will announce them in class and on OWL. I include the list here as each of these sources may be useful to you as you determine the topic or theme of your own case study. I anticipate I will skip some of these readings and replace them with articles that you identify in your own research for your case studies. I promise that for readings from books that are on reserve in the library, I will give you ample time to find and read the source in the library.

**October 16-18** Social Reproduction as Political Machine!

**October 23-25** Ungovernable Economies

**October 30, November 1** Politics as Daily Life

**November 6-8** Global Economic Actors

**November 13-15** Beyond Real Subsumption

**November 20-22** Epistemologies of Escape

**November 27-29** Non-compliance and Technologies of Rule

**December 4-6** There is a There There After all

Reading List (additions will be announced in class)

Aikau, Hōkūlani K. and Donna Ann Kameha‘ikū Camvel. 2016. Cultural Traditions and Food: Kānaka Maoli and the Production of Poi in the He‘e‘ia Wetland. *Food, Culture & Society*, 19:3, 539-561.

Altimairano-Jimenez, Isabel. 2013. *Indigenous Encounters with Neoliberalism*. Vancouver: UBC Press. (2-hour reserve in Huron’s library)

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. 2017. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. Duluth: University of Minnesota Press. (2-hour reserve in Huron’s library)

Cavanagh, Connor Joseph and Tor A. Benjaminsen. 2015. Guerrilla Agriculture? A Biopolitical Guide to Illicit Cultivation Within an IUCN Category II Protected Area. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42:3-4, 725-745.

Chuang, Julia. 2015. Urbanization Through Dispossession: Survival and Stratification in China's New Townships. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42:2, 275-294.

Dressler, Wolfram H. and Eulalio R. Guieb III. 2015. Violent Enclosures, Violated Livelihoods: Environmental and Military Territoriality in a Philippine Frontier. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42:2, 323-345.

Glover, Dominic and Glenn Davis Stone. 2018. Heirloom Rice in Ifugao: An 'Anticommodity' in the Process of Commodification. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45:4, 776-804.

Grubacic, Andrej and Denis O'Hearn. *Living at the Edges of Capitalism: Adventures in Exile and Mutual Aid*. Oakland: University of California Press. (on 2-hour reserve in Huron's library)

Heynen, Nik. 2009. Bending the Bars of Empire from Every Ghetto for Survival: The Black Panther Party's Radical Antihunger Politics of Social Reproduction and Scale. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 99(2): 406-422.

Kerssen, Tanya. 2013. *Grabbing Power: The new struggles for land, food and democracy in Northern Honduras*. Oakland, Calif.: Food First Books. (on 2-hour reserve in Huron's library)

Morton, Gregory Duff . 2015. Managing transience: Bolsa Família and its Subjects in an MST Landless Settlement. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42:6, 1283-1305.

Mvuselelo, Ngcoya and Narendran Kumarakulasingham. 2017. The Lived Experience of Food Sovereignty: Gender, Indigenous Crops and Small-Scale Farming in Mtubatuba, South Africa. *Journal of Agrarian Change*. 17(3): 480-496.

Parson, Sean. 2014. Breaking Bread, Sharing Soup, and Smashing the State: Food Not Bombs and Anarchist Critiques of the Neoliberal Charity State. *Theory in Action*, 7(4): 33-51.

Pope, Ricky J. and Shawn T. Flanigan. 2013. Revolution for Breakfast: Intersections of Activism, Service, and Violence in the Black Panther Party's Community Service Programs. *Social Justice Research*. 26: 445-270.

Pothukuchi, Kameshwari. 2015. Five Decades of Community Food Planning in Detroit: City and Grassroots, Growth and Equity. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 35(4): 419-434.

Potorti, Mary. 2014. Feeding Revolution: The Black Panther Party and the Politics of Food. *Radical Teacher: A Socialist, Feminist, and Anti-Racist Journal on the Theory and Practice of Teaching*, 98: 43-49.

Trocaire. 2016. Economies of Dispossession: Women from Honduras and Guatemala in the Global Scramble for Land. Paper prepared for presentation at the 2016 World Bank Conference On Land And Poverty” The World Bank - Washington DC, March 14-18, 2016.

Thaler, Gregory M and Cut Augusta Mindry Anandi. 2017. Shifting Cultivation, Contentious Land Change and Forest Governance: The Politics of Swidden In East Kalimantan. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 44:5, 1066-1087.

Van den Berg, Leonardo and Paul Hebinck & Dirk Roep. 2018. ‘We Go Back to The Land’: Processes of Re-Peasantisation In Araponga, Brazil. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45:3, 653-675.

Vaughan, Mehana Blaich and Adam L. Ayers. 2016. Customary Access: Sustaining Local Control of Fishing and Food on Kaua‘i’s North Shore. *Food, Culture & Society*, 19:3, 517-538.

White, Monica M. 2011. Shouldering Responsibility for the Delivery of Human Rights: A Case Study of the D-Town Farmers of Detroit. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*. 3(2): 189-211.

Wolford, Wendy. 2003. Producing Community: The MST and Land Reform Settlements in Brazil. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3(4): 500-520.

Wolford, Wendy. 2009. Everyday Forms of Political Expression. (Grassroots Voices). *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(2): 411-458.



**The Appendix to Course Outlines is posted on the OWL course site.**