



RESEARCH TALK

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Marx and Microwork: Night Work and Social Reproduction in the Factory and on the Platform

This talk lays foundations for a critique of night work in contemporary capitalism through a novel reassessment of Marx's analysis of "the working day" in 19th century England. It reads Marx against the grain, gleaning overlooked conceptual resources for understanding night-work's vampiric devastation of working-class social reproduction, as the rule of capital over the worker's "life-day" leads to both the quantitative exploitation of workers and qualitative impoverishment of everyday time and freedom. Night comes to represent the contracted time, condensed space, petrified relational capacities and thwarted desires for human "reproduction" that includes reinvigorating oneself, caring for others, and enjoying experiences apart from work or care. I demonstrate the power of this under-developed Marxian analytic by considering the compression and warping of social-reproductive time among today's "microworkers": a global legion of labourers who work at all hours earning a pittance doing platform-based online 'tasks.' On this basis, the paper argues for making struggles over social reproduction central to working-class politics today.

LOCATION/TIME:

Skye Hall 173

Monday, April 10, 2023

12:00 – 1:20pm

ZOOM DETAILS:

Meeting ID: 935 6530 1515

Passcode : 738063

<https://ucr.zoom.us/j/93565301515>