

Dirty and Dangerous Work PLSC 432 / SOCY 302

Spring, 2007

*Who built Thebes of the seven gates?
In the books the kings are named,
But who hauled the rock?
And Babylon, many times demolished,
Who raised it again? In what houses
Of gold-glittering Lima did the builders live?
Where, when the Great Wall of China was
finally done,
Did the masons go?*

- Bertolt Brecht, *Questions from a Worker*
Who Reads

*The history of men is reflected in the
history of sewers...The sewer of Paris
had been a formidable old thing. It had
been a sepulchre; it had been an asylum.
Crime, intelligence, social protest,
freedom of conscience, thought, theft, all
that human laws prosecuted or have
prosecuted, was hidden in this pit...*

- Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables*

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Class Meetings:
Thursdays, 7-8.50 p.m. 8 Prospect
Pl., Rm. 119
Office Hours:
Fridays, 2-4 p.m. & by appt.

Description

Unclean, demeaning, repugnant, and dangerous jobs exist in every human society. But in a just society, how should this dirty and dangerous work be distributed? In this seminar, we bring a variety of frameworks from political economy, normative political theory, sociology, and anthropology to bear on this question. In the process, we will explore how “dirty” and “dangerous” come to be defined as such, what roles power and efficiency play in distributing dirty and dangerous work, and how this work exercises, although not without contestation and resistance, a definitional power over those who perform it.

The seminar is structured to stretch us in many ways—imaginative and theoretical, empirical and normative, comparative and specific—and one measure of our success will be our capacity, at the semester’s end, to talk, think, and write about dirty and dangerous work in ways that articulate the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of perspectives and traditions. We begin (week 2) with an exercise of the imagination, reading a contemporary dystopian novel for its power to cast a strange light on the divisions of labor that we experience as normal--and perhaps even natural--features of our everyday lives. Having made strange these divisions of labor, we turn next (weeks 3&4) to longstanding

discussions in social theory that seek to give both empirical and normative accounts of the explosion in the division of labor accompanying industrialism. These discussions reflect deep and continuing disagreements over the origins, impacts, and future of the division of labor, and we end this portion of the seminar (week 5) by sketching their implications for thinking about dirty and dangerous work through the lens of power vs. efficiency. In the seminar's third portion (weeks 6 - 8), we turn to anthropology and historical sociology in order to explore the construction of the dirty and the dangerous and the evolving frontiers that divide the repugnant from the acceptable. Next (week 9), we examine the efforts of several contemporary political theorists to articulate a relationship between justice and the delegation of dirty and dangerous work. In the final portion of the seminar (weeks 10 – 12), we bring these varied lenses to bear on ethnographic and situated studies of garbage and waste workers, domestic workers, slaughterhouse workers, and police torturers and murderers. The lived experiences of those who perform dirty and dangerous work raise critical questions about power, intersectional identities of race, class, gender, and citizenship status, and the possibilities of individual and collective resistance. Finally, in our last session (week 13) we will turn to your own explorations of the politics of dirty and dangerous work.

Requirements & Grading

1. Participation (15%): Your preparation, presence, and participation are crucial. Please complete the required readings, be on time for each class, bring all relevant texts, and contribute energetically to the discussions. As a reflection of the importance I place on your participation, each unexcused absence will lower your participation grade by 5%. Attendance at out-of-class evening films throughout the semester is optional but will boost your participation grade and significantly enhance your experience of the course.
2. Weekly Reaction Papers (10%): A concise, one single-spaced page reaction to each week's readings is due via e-mail to the class list-serve (plsc432_s07@classesv2.yale.edu) by 9 a.m. the day of class. These reaction pieces should engage (i.e., question, critique, support, apply, argue against, signal areas of confusion, etc.) the readings: *do not write summaries!* I will offer constructive feedback on the reaction papers each week. Reaction papers are *not* due in weeks 2 and 9 or in the week(s) that you lead discussion, and you may skip one additional week of your choice without penalty.
3. Discussion Leading (15%): In week two, a sign up schedule for weeks 3-12 of the seminar will be circulated. You must sign up individually or with a partner to be a discussion leader for at least one seminar. Responsibilities of the discussion leader(s) include formulating provocative and engaging questions to encourage critical discussion, preparing at least one hand-out to facilitate discussion, and writing a two-page report of the discussion to be distributed to the class one week later.
4. Short Assignments (20%): There will be two short assignments and presentations (worth 10% each) due in weeks 2 and 9 of the course (details in schedule below).
5. Oral History/Participant-Observation (40%): The seminar's central project will be an oral history/participant-observation study of some aspect of dirty and dangerous work

in the New Haven/Yale economy. The project will entail observing and interviewing people about their jobs, authority relations, experiences of collective action, and attitudes about work and supplementing these observations and interviews with additional research on major actors and institutions of relevance. The write-up of this oral history (15 - 20 pages) should bring your observations, interviews, and research into direct, sustained dialogue with the frameworks developed in this seminar. The study may be conducted individually or in pairs and will be presented orally at our final session on May 3. The written report is due May 7. I strongly encourage you to begin thinking about this project early in the semester and to consult with me regularly on its progress. *You must schedule a meeting with me no later than March 8 to discuss your project.*

6. There are no exams.

Texts

The following texts are available for purchase at Labyrinth Books (290 York Street, ph. 203.787.2848) and are on reserve at the library.

Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed* (Harper Collins, 2003 [1974]).

Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (Praeger, 1966).

Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Blackwell, 2000 [1939]).

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence* (Berkeley, 2001).

Martha K. Huggins, Mika Haritos-Fatouros, and Philip G. Zimbardo, *Violence Workers: Police Torturers and Murderers Reconstruct Brazilian Atrocities* (U CA Press, 2002).

All other required readings are in the course packet (CP), available for purchase at Tyco Copies (262 Elm St., ph. 203.562.2679).

Schedule

Week One (Jan. 18): Why?

· *What is a politics of dirty and dangerous work? Why study it?*

No Reading

Week Two (Jan. 25): Seeing! Or, A Lunar Anarchist Visits Yale

· *In what ways do we experience the division of labor as a natural feature of our everyday lived experience? What are the mechanisms (spatial, psychological, and material) that help to keep the performance of dirty and dangerous work invisible? What would it mean to de-naturalize dirty and dangerous work and make it visible?*

Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed* (Harper Collins, 2003 [1974]), entire.

In-Class Presentations

Short Assignment #1 (presented in class; write-up due in class)

President Levin has invited Shevek of Anarres to give the commencement address at your graduation. Given what you know of Shevek from *The Dispossessed*, write a speech (three to four double-spaced pages) that addresses the division of labor at Yale with a special focus on dirty and/or dangerous work. You may wish to pay special attention to the relationship between job functions and the distribution of privileges that accompany them (status, required dress, salary, parking spaces, working hours, physical location, honorific titles, visibility, etc.) Your speech may be descriptive (describing how things *are*) and/or prescriptive (describing how things *ought to be*). Be creative!

Week Three (Feb. 1): The Division of Labor I: Adam Smith, Karl Marx & F. Engels
· *How did Smith and Marx/Engels understand the origins, impacts, and future of the division of labor? What are the implications for thinking about a politics of dirty and dangerous work?*

Adam Smith. “Of the Division of Labour,” “Of the Principle which Gives Occasion to the Division of Labour,” “That the Division of Labour is Limited by the Extent of the Market,” and “Inequalities of Wages and Profits arising from the Nature of the Employments Themselves,” in *The Wealth of Nations* (Random House, 1994 [1776]), pp. 3 – 23; 114 – 136. (CP)

Karl Marx, “Estranged Labour” and “The Meaning of Human Requirements” in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* [pp. 70 – 81; 93 - 101] (CP) [Page numbers for Marx and Engels refer to Robert Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (Norton, 1978).]

Selections on the division of labor from *The German Ideology* [pp. 151 – 155; 159-160] (CP)

“The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power,” “The Working Day,” “Division of Labour and Manufacture,” and “Machinery and Modern Industry” in *Capital, Volume I* [pp. 336 – 343; 361 – 376; 388 – 403; 403 – 417] (CP)

“Classes” in *Capital, Volume III* [pp. 441- 442] (CP)

Manifesto of the Communist Party [pp. 473 - 500] (CP)

Friedrich Engels, “On the Division of Labour in Production” in *Anti-Duhring* [pp. 718 – 724] (CP)

Recommended:

Elliot Krause, “Marx: Division and Ownership” in *Division of Labor: A Political Perspective* (Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 17-41.

Anthony Giddens, “Marx” in *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 1-64.

Kai Erikson, “On Work and Alienation” in *The Nature of Work* (Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 19-35.

Week Four (Feb. 8): The Division of Labor II: Emile Durkheim and Max Weber
· How did Durkheim and Weber understand the origin, impacts, and future of the division of labor? What are the implications for thinking about a politics of dirty and dangerous work?

Emile Durkheim, “Introduction: The Problem,” “The Anomic Division of Labor,” “The Forced Division of Labor,” “Another Abnormal Form,” and “Conclusion” in *Division of Labor In Society* (Trans. George Simpson, The Free Press, 1964 [1893]), pp. 39-48; 353 – 409. (CP)

Max Weber, “Class, Status, Party” and “The Meaning of Discipline” in Gerth and Mills, eds. *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology* (Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 180–195; 253–262. (CP)

Anthony Giddens, “Social Differentiation and the Division of Labour” in *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 224 – 242. (CP)

Recommended:

Elliot Krause, “Weber: Division and Rationality” and “Durkheim: Division and Solidarity” in *Division of Labor: A Political Perspective* (Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 42 - 98.

Anthony Giddens, “Durkheim” and “Weber” in *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 65 – 184.

Week Five (Feb. 15): The Division of Labor III: Power vs. Efficiency
· What difference does it make if we understand the delegation of dirty and dangerous work to be a result of power vs. of efficiency?

Dietrich Rueschmeyer, “Introduction,” “The Results of Increasing Division of Labour,” “The Role of Efficiency and Power in Explanations of the Division of Labour,” “The Organization of Work in Industry: Imposition and Resistance,” and “Coda: Power and the Division of Labour” in *Power and the Division of Labour*.

(Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 1 – 53; 71 – 103; 170 - 199. (CP)

E.P. Thompson, “Time, Work Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,” *Past and Present*, 38, 1967, pp. 56 – 97. (CP)

Recommended:

Harry Braverman, “The Division of Labor,” in *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press, 1974), pp. 70-84.

Week Six (Feb. 22): Constructing the Dirty and Dangerous I: Matter out of Place

· *What is the relationship between dirt and moral danger? What is the relationship between danger and power? What are the implications for thinking about a politics of dirty and dangerous work?*

Mary Douglas, “Introduction,” “Secular Defilement,” “Abominations of Leviticus,” “Magic and Miracle,” and “Powers and Dangers,” in *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Praeger, 1966), pp. 1 – 6; 29 – 112.

Carl Zimring, “How Hygiene and Xenophobia Marginalized the American Waste Trades, 1870 – 1930,” *Environmental History*, 9:1, January 2004, pp. 80 – 101.

Donald Reid, “Sewers and the Social Order” in *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and Representations* (Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 18 – 24).

Week Seven (March 1): Constructing the Dirty and Dangerous II: Frontiers of Repugnance

· *What difference does Elias’ history of the frontiers of repugnance make to how we think about the politics of dirty and dangerous work? How are the frontiers of repugnance related to visibility and invisibility in the location and performance of dirty work?*

Norbert Elias, “Civilization as a Specific Transformation of Human Behavior,” in *The Civilizing Process* (Trans. Edmund Jephcott, Blackwell Publishers, 2000 [1939]), pp. 47 – 182.

Noelie Vialles, “A Place that is No-Place” and “Flaying the Animal: The Disjunctions Involved” in *Animal to Edible* (Trans. J.A. Underwood, Cambridge University Press, 1994 [1984]), pp. 15 – 51.

Week Eight (March 8): No Class--Individual Meetings with Instructor

Oral History/Participant-Observation Projects Must Be Approved by this Date

ENJOY SPRING BREAK!

Week Nine (March 29): Justice and the Delegation of Dirty and Dangerous Work

· *Of these competing approaches to the relationship between justice and the delegation of dirty and dangerous work, which (combination) do you find most persuasive? Why? What are the implications of each for the politics of dirty and dangerous work?*

Joseph Berliner, “Who Should Do the Dirty Work?” in *The Economics of the Good Society: The Variety of Economic Arrangements* (Blackwell, 1999), pp. 106 – 127. (CP)

Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression” and “Affirmative Action and the Myth of Merit” in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 39 – 65; 192 – 225. (CP)

Michael Walzer, “Hard Work,” in *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (Basic Books, 1983), pp. 165 – 183. (CP)

Robert Nozick, “Equality, Envy, Exploitation, Etc.” in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (Basic Books, 1974), pp. 232 – 275. (CP)

Recommended:

John Rawls, “Property Owning Democracy,” “Some Basic Contrasts Between Regimes,” and “Addressing Marx’s Critique of Liberalism” in *Justice as Fairness, A Restatement* (Belknap Press, 2001), pp. 135 – 140; 176 – 179.

Short Assignment # 2 Due Next Week!

Week Ten (April 5): Garbage and Waste: Stigma, Status, and Negotiated Identities

· *Garbage and waste work opens a window on the negotiation of stigma, status, and identity in dirty and dangerous work. What are the relationships between the self, society, and the performance of dirty and dangerous work?*

Ray Gold, “Janitors Versus Tenants: A Status-Income Dilemma,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, 57:5, March, 1952, pp. 486 – 493. (CP)

Marcia J. Ghidina, “Social Relations and the Definition of Work: Identity Management in a Low-Status Occupation,” *Qualitative Sociology*, 15:1, 1992, pp. 73 – 85. (CP)

Teresa Gowan, “American Untouchables: Homeless Scavengers in San Francisco’s Underground Economy,” *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 17:3/4, 1997, pp. 159 – 190. (CP)

Michael Keith Honey, “I AM A MAN: Unionism and the Black Working Poor,” “Taylor

Rogers Relives the Memphis Sanitation Strike,” “James Robinson Describes the Worst Job He Ever Had,” “Leroy Boyd and Clarence Coe Recall a Strike and the Death of Martin Luther King” and “William Lucy Reflects on the Strike’s Meaning and Outcome” in *Black Workers Remember, An Oral History of Segregation, Unionism, and the Freedom Struggle* (University of California Press, 1999), pp. 286 – 321. (CP)

Roger Waldinger et. al., “Helots No More: A Case Study of the Justice for Janitors Campaign in Los Angeles,” *Organizing to Win: New Research on Union Strategies* (Kate Brofenbrenner et. al. eds., ILR, 1998), pp. 102 – 119. (CP)

Short Assignment # 2 (presented in class; write-up due in class)

[Read Teresa Gowan’s “American Untouchables” before completing this assignment.] Individually or with a partner, spend 45 minutes to an hour sorting through trash and recycling bins located in public places. Take inventory of what you find in the garbage, collecting and bringing anything of value to class. Pay special attention to your internal thoughts and feelings as you conduct this exercise, to how you present yourself to others during the exercise, to the reactions you receive from people around you as you conduct the exercise, and to the reactions of friends and roommates who hear about the exercise. Although I encourage you to conduct this exercise in as public and visible a location and time as possible (Chapel Street; Orange Street; New Haven Green), you may also sort through your dorm’s trash bins (as long as they are located in a publicly accessible area). Write a three to four page paper (double-spaced) documenting your results. Be sure to note the date, location, and time of your study, as well as how you were dressed.

Recommended:

Donald Reid, “Cesspool Cleaners and Sewermen,” “Disorder Above and Order Below,” and “The Body of Sewermen” in *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and Representations* (Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 87 – 106; 147 - 168.

Stewart Perry, *Collecting Garbage: Dirty Work, Clean Jobs, Proud People* (Transaction, 1998 [1978 as *San Francisco Scavengers*]).

Blake Ashforth and Glen Kreiner, “‘How Can You Do It?’: Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity,” *The Academy of Management Review*, 24:3, July 1999, pp. 413 – 434.

Conrad Saunders, “An Analysis of Occupational Stigma,” in *Social Stigma of Occupations: The Lower Grade Worker in Service Organisations* (Gower, 1981), pp. 42– 53.

Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor, “Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies: Masculinity in the Clydeside Heavy Industries, c. 1930 – 1970s” *Labour History Review* 69: 2, August 2004, pp. 135 – 151.

Week Eleven (April 12): No Class–Individual Consultations with Instructor

Week Twelve (April 19): Domestic Work: Domination and Resistance at Close Quarters & Slaughter and Disassembly: The Disposable Worker and Her Family

· *In what ways is reproductive work gendered and racially divided? How are these divisions imposed, enforced, and resisted? What are the implications for how we think about the relationships between identity and dirty and dangerous work?*

· *What makes industrialized slaughterhouse work so dangerous? What are the politics of regulating slaughterhouse work? In what ways does slaughterhouse work eclipse the worker both inside and outside the slaughterhouse?*

Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence* (Berkeley, 2001), selections.

Steve Striffler, “Inside a Poultry Plant” in *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America’s Favorite Food* (Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 111 – 134. (CP)

Eric Schlosser, “The Most Dangerous Job” in *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (Harper Collins, 2002), pp. 148 – 190. (CP)

Janet E. Benson, “The Effects of Packinghouse Work on Southeast Asian Refugee Families” in Louis Lamphere et. al. eds, *Newcomers in the Workplace: Immigrants and the Restructuring of the U.S. Economy* (Temple University Press, 1994), pp. 99 - 126. (CP)

Human Rights Watch, *Blood, Sweat, and Fear: Worker’s Rights in U.S. Meat and Poultry Plants* (2004), available online at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2005/usa0105/> {SKIM}.

Recommended:

Judith Rollins, *Between Women: Domestic Workers and their Employers* (Temple University Press, 1985).

Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (Metropolitan Books, 2002).

Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor,” in Cameron Macdonald and Carmen Sirianni, eds. *Working in the Service Society* (Temple University Press, 1996), pp. 115 – 156.

Clare L. Stacey, “Finding Dignity in Dirty Work: The Constraints and Rewards of Low-Wage Home Care Labour,” *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 27:6, 2005, pp. 831-

854.

Jennifer Mendez, "Of Mops and Maids: Contradictions and Continuities in Bureaucratized Domestic Work," *Social Problems*, 45:1, Feb., 1998, pp. 114-135.

Roger Horowitz, "'Where Men Will Not Work': Gender, Power, Space and the Division of Labor in America's Meatpacking Industry, 1890 - 1990. *Technology and Culture*, 1997, pp. 187 - 213.

Roger Horowitz, "*Negro and White, Unite and Fight!*" *A Social History of Industrial Unionism in Meatpacking, 1930-1990*. (University of Illinois Press, 1998).

Rick Halpern and Roger Horowitz, *Meatpackers: An Oral History of Black Packinghouse Workers and Their Struggle for Racial and Economic Equality* (Twayne, 1996).

Week Thirteen (April 26): Violence as Work

· *What does it mean to think of atrocity as work? In what way is it similar to and/or different from the other types of dirty work we look at in this class? Can/should it be placed on a continuum with other kinds of dirty work? Why or why not? In what ways do accounts by police torturers and murderers challenge the framework you have developed so far in this class?*

Martha K. Huggins, Mika Haritos-Fatouros, and Philip G. Zimbardo, *Violence Workers: Police Torturers and Murderers Reconstruct Brazilian Atrocities* (U CA Press, 2002), selections.

Recommended:

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cornell, 1989).

Week Thirteen (May 3): The Politics of Dirty and Dangerous Work

Oral History/Participant-Observation Presentations

FINAL PAPERS DUE MAY 7th BY NOON

(e-mailed as an attachment and a hard copy in my Brewster Hall mailbox)