

Fall 2023. Online.

UA SOC 326: WORK AND SOCIETY

ZHUOFAN LI

(he/him/his) *PhD Candidate, School of Sociology*

Email: LIZHUOFAN@ARIZONA.EDU

Office Hour: Social Science 436B, TBD and by appointment

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Your Instructor ^a

^awho thanks Kieran Healy for generously sharing his beautiful L^AT_EX template.

0.1 COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces to you the sociology of work. We may spend **ONLY** one third of our adult life **AT WORK**, but more time **WORKING**. When we are not at work, we think about work, we prepare ourselves for future work (which we are doing right now), we look for work, we take on housework, we watch others work on Twitter and on Twitch, we try to dodge work, and we will teach our children to work hard. Philosopher Hannah Arendt said that our existence in the world can be captured by the distinction among three fundamental human activities – labor, work, and action – and the sociology of work is responsible for two-third of who we are and how we exist.

This course also introduces to you a specific kind of sociology of work that Professor Jeff Sallaz has taught me. I steal substantially from his version of this course, the graduate seminar he taught, and his book *Labor, Economy, and Society*, but mixing in my own interests in social networks, algorithmic society, platform economy, materiality of knowledge, and China. I will try to show, following his book, how work has been mystified and fetishized as a **FICTITIOUS COMMODITY** that conceals its own variability and blurs its distinction from labor and from life. I hope this will give you new ideas about how to manage your own love-hate relationship with work down the road.

0.2 COURSE FORMAT AND COMMUNICATIONS

This is an asynchronous online course. All course materials/assignments will be delivered/submitted through “Content”, “Discussion”, “Assignments” and “Quizzes” on D2L. I will be available through “Discussion”, via email, and during office hours.

Reading is the single most important component of this online course. We will not meet in a classroom for 2 hours and 30 minutes a week. Instead, you should be prepared to spend at least 4-6 hours each week reading 60-80 pages and watching documentary clips. There will also be two exams and a course paper.

Communicate, communicate, communicate. I understand from my own experience as an international student that the institution of higher education often fails to accommodate physical, cultural, ethnic, religious, political, life-stage, and other human differences. It is precisely those differences that keep sociologists up at night. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any reasonable accommodation can be provided to help you participate in the learning process.

0.3 REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS

Required textbook: Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

All other readings will be available on D2L.

0.4 ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL EXAMINATION: SCHEDULES/DUE DATES

Assignments (25%)

You will complete 15 weekly reading assignments, in the form of D2L “Discussion” threads, due every Monday at 11:59PM Tucson time. Those assignments are designed to help you focus and reflect when you read, and I may ask you to respond to each others’ threads. You do not need to consult any external sources unless otherwise instructed. Most questions take 3-5 full sentences to answer, and those sentences should be your own words. Your grade for assignments will be the average of your highest 12 scores and count towards 25% of your final grade. I will drop your 3 lowest scores at the end of the semester.

Exams (25% each)

You will take a midterm and a final exam. Each exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions, to be completed online via D2L within 1 hour and

20 minutes once you start it during Week 8-9 and the final exam period. Be prepared to reference required readings, documentaries, reading questions, and your notes during the exam. The midterm will cover Week 1 through Week 7, and the final Week 8 through Week 16. For more information, see <https://registrar.arizona.edu/finals>. Your grade on each of the exams will count towards 25% of your final grade.

Paper (25%)

You will write a final paper to present an original case study of a job of interest to you. Over the semester, there will be a series of deadlines for you to submit a proposal, an annotated bibliography, and a detailed outline for feedback and partial grade. The final submission should be no shorter than 5 full pages double spaced not counting the bibliography, use a 12pt Times New Roman font and 1 inch margins, and include page numbers at the bottom. Your paper will be evaluated based on how well you engage accurately and critically with the theoretical perspectives of the sociology of work that we learn from class materials (5%), engage accurately and critically with empirical evidence and counter-arguments in external sources (5%), develop and defend a sociological argument about the job of interest (5%), (4) write clearly, concisely, and using grammar properly (5%), and follow the citation style and formatting requirements (5%). Your grade on the paper will count towards 25% of your final grade.

LATE WORK or MISSING EXAM PERIODS will result in a score of zero, unless otherwise arranged in advance. Contact me before the deadline about any situation that is affecting you so that we can figure out a plan for you to keep up with the course. If you are having a medical or family emergency, contact the Dean of Students office directly. For more information, see the “UA’s Absence and Class Attendance Accommodation Policy” section.

PLAGIARISM, including but not limited to (1) copying verbatim from other sources such as Wikipedia and book reviews, (2) paraphrasing other sources without proper citations, (3) having others do the work for you, and (4) selling copyrighted course materials, will result in a score of zero on the assignment and may lead to a failing grade on the whole course. Guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism will be provided. Repeat offenders will be reported to the Dean of Students office. No exception. For more information, see the “Code of Academic Integrity” section.

Other course policies can be found under Section 0.6.

0.5 COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 Introduction

“Introduction: What Good is Work?” p.1-16 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

DOCUMENTARY: Graham Townsley, dir. 2021. *Future of Work. Episode 1, The New Industrial Revolution*. [\[Link\]](#)

WEEK 2 The Great Transformation of Work: The Origins of Management

“The Great Transformation of Work.” p.17-40 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

“The Personal Touch: Competitive Capitalism and the Simple Forms of Control.” p.23-36 in Edwards, Richards. 1980. *Contested Terrain*. Basic Books.

“The Origins of Management.” p.59-69 in Braverman, Harry. 1974. *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.

DOCUMENTARY: Gray, Lorraine. 1979. *With Babies and Banners: Story of the Women’s Emergency Brigade*. [\[Link\]](#)

WEEK 3 The Great Transformation of Work: The American Factory

Bonacich, Edna. 1976. “Advanced Capitalism and Black/White Race Relations in the United States: A Split Labor Market Interpretation.” *American Sociological Review* 41 (1): 34–51.

Milkman, Ruth. 1982. “Redefining “Women’s Work”: The Sexual Division of Labor in the Auto Industry during World War II.” *Feminist Studies* 8 (2): 337–372.

“Economic Transformation and the Decline of Institutional Protections” and “New Workers, New Differences.” p.21-58 in Kalleberg, Arne L. 2011. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s-2000s*. Russell Sage Foundation.

DOCUMENTARY: “You’re Just Disposable.” a 10-minute clip in James Jacoby, dir. 2020. *Amazon Empire: The Rise and Reign of Jeff Bezos*. [\[Link\]](#)

WEEK 4 Classifying Labor: Between Work and Life

“Classifying Labor.” p.41-65 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

“Forward to the Past and the Early Industrial Age” and “Workplace Troubles.” p. 61-112 in Ravenelle, Alexandra J. 2019. *Hustle and Gig: Struggling and Surviving in the Sharing Economy*. University of California Press.

DOCUMENTARY: Marije Meerman, dir. 2001. *Chain of love*. [[Link](#)]

DUE: Paper Proposal.

WEEK 5 **Classifying Labor: Between Work and Professions**

Abbott, Andrew. 1986. “Jurisdictional Conflicts: A New Approach to the Development of the Legal Professions.” *American Bar Foundation Research Journal* 11 (2): 187–224.

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. “Sandpiles of Dignity: Labor Status and Boundary-Making in the Contemporary American Prison.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 6 (1): 198–216.

Sheehan, Patrick. 2022. “The Paradox of Self-Help Expertise: How Unemployed Workers Become Professional Career Coaches.” *American Journal of Sociology* 127 (4): 1151–1182.

WEEK 6 **Commensurating Labor: From Piece-Rate to Task-Rate**

“Commensurating Labor.” p.66-87 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

“The Logic of the Weavers’ Piece-Rate Scales.” p. 43-73 in Biernacki, Richard. 1995. *The Fabrication of Labor: Germany and Britain, 1640-1914*. University of California Press.

Wilmers, Nathan. 2020. “Job Turf or Variety: Task Structure as a Source of Organizational Inequality.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 65 (4): 1018–1057.

McKenna, Laura. 2015. “The College President-to-Adjunct Pay Ratio.” *The Atlantic*.

WEEK 7 **Commensurating Labor: Pricing Beauty**

Williams, Christine L and Connell, Catherine. 2010. “Looking Good and Sounding Right: Aesthetic Labor and Social Inequality in the Retail Industry.” *Work and Occupations* 37 (3): 349–377.

Mears, Ashley. 2015. “Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent.” *American Sociological Review* 80 (6): 1099–1122.

DOCUMENTARY: Vicky Funari and Julia Query, dirs. 2000. *Live Nude Girls*

Unite! [\[Link\]](#)

DUE: Annotated Bibliography.

WEEK 8 Making Labor Markets: The Right Résumé

“Making Labor Markets.” p.88-109 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. “Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms.” *American Sociological Review* 77 (6): 999–1022.

Kang, Sonia K et al. 2016. “Whitened Résumés: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 61 (3): 469–502.

WEEK 9 Making Labor Markets: The Right One to Blame

Smith, Sandra Susan. 2005. “Don’t Put My Name on It’: Social Capital Activation and Job-Finding Assistance among the Black Urban Poor.” *American Journal of Sociology* 111 (1): 1–57.

Sharone, Ofer. 2013. “Why Do Unemployed Americans Blame Themselves While Israelis Blame the System?” *Social Forces* 91 (4): 1429–1450.

DUE: Midterm.

WEEK 10 Controlling Labor: Disciplining Body

“Controlling Labor.” p.110-133 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2015. “Permanent Pedagogy: How Post-Fordist Firms Generate Effort but Not Consent.” *Work and Occupations* 42 (1): 3–34.

“Producing ‘IT People’ in Andhra”, “Selling ‘Bodies’ and Selling Jobs”, and “Compliant Bodies?” p.24-52, 82-92 in from Xiang, Biao. 2007. *Global “Body Shopping”: An Indian Labor System in the Information Technology Industry*. Princeton University Press.

WEEK 11 Controlling Labor: Disciplining Time

“Overload” and “How We Got Here and Why It Matters.” p.13-76 in Kelly, Erin L and Moen, Phyllis. 2020. *Overload: How Good Jobs Went Bad and What We Can Do about It*. Princeton University Press.

WEEK 12 Labor and Group-Making: China’s Today Is America’s Yesterday, On the Mobile App

“Labor and Group-Making.” p.134-156 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

Lei, Ya-Wen. 2021. "Delivering Solidarity: Platform Architecture and Collective Contention in China's Platform Economy." *American Sociological Review* 86 (2): 279–309.

DOCUMENTARY: Huang, Wenhai. 2017. *We the Workers*. Brooklyn, New York. [\[Link\]](#)

DUE: Detailed Outline.

WEEK 13 **The Future of Work: Click-Bating and Series-B**

"The Multiple Meanings of Clicks: Journalists and Their Algorithmic Publics." p.75-135 in Christin, Angèle. 2020. *Metrics at Work: Journalism and the Contested Meaning of Algorithms*. Princeton University Press.

Shestakofsky, Benjamin. 2017. "Working Algorithms: Software Automation and the Future of Work." *Work and Occupations* 44 (4): 376–423.

WEEK 14 **Thanksgiving**

WEEK 15 **The Future of Work: Streamers and Butcher Knives**

"Home Studios: Transforming Private Play into Public Entertainment." p.66-104 in Taylor, T L. 2018. *Watch Me Play: Twitch and the Rise of Game Live Streaming*. Princeton University Press.

"Show the Animal" and "How Middle-Class Kids Want Working-Class Jobs." p.101-126, 129-158 in Ocejo, Richard E. 2018. *Masters of Craft: Old Jobs in the New Urban Economy*. Princeton University Press.

WEEK 16 **The Future of Work: Conclusion**

"Conclusion: What Good is Embeddedness?" p.157-168 in Sallaz, Jeffrey J. 2013. *Labor, Economy, and Society*. Polity.

DUE: Course Paper.

DUE: Final Exam.

0.6 OTHER COURSE POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scale and Policies

Assignments	25%	A (Excellent):	90-100%
Mid-term Exam	25%	B (Good):	80-89%
Final Exam	25%	C (Satisfactory):	70-79%
Paper	25%	D (Poor):	60-69%
		E (Failure):	< 60%
Total	100%		

Requests for incomplete (I) or withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies, which are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system>. Make sure to check your grade regularly, as any discrepancy or dispute regarding the grade must be resolved before the semester ends.

Course Objectives

- Learn key concepts, thinkers, and theories in the sociology of work.
- Apply sociological concepts to build a critical perspective of work.
- Gain a basic understanding of research methods used in the sociology of work.
- Engage the “sociological imagination” to interpret our world and our individual experiences within a broader society where related to work, occupations, and professions.

Expected Learning Outcomes and Skill Development

- Knowledge of workplace and labor market inequality: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of social inequalities in the contemporary workplace and labor market based on class, gender, race, and/or sexual orientation. Students will also demonstrate knowledge about how to critically evaluate arguments about and solutions to inequality and diversity in the workplace and labor market.
- Knowledge of social institutions of work: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the key social institutions in the sociology of work (the school, the family, labor markets, social networks, organizations among others) and their interconnections.
- Knowledge of how to think critically about social issues in the contemporary workplace and labor market: Students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills, complex reasoning, and written communication skills.

- Knowledge of research methods and primary research evidence: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of research methods, techniques of social research, and primary research evidence, including the interpretation of basic statistics and/or direct research evidence from scientific journals.

Copyright Materials

All course materials are copyrighted, and the copyright is held either by the instructor or by the original author(s). These include but are not limited to readings, documentaries, lecture videos, handouts, assignments, and exams and are made available to students for your personal use and for educational purposes only. Any unauthorized redistribution or reproduction of course materials for commercial purposes is subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of electronic resources provided by The University of Arizona and may result in sanctions by the Dean of Students office. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement punishable by federal law.

Notification of Objectionable Materials

This course may contain material of a mature nature, which may include explicit language, depictions of nudity, sexual situations, and/or violence. The instructor will provide advance notice when such materials will be used. Students are not automatically excused from interacting with such materials, but they are encouraged to speak with the instructor to voice concerns and to provide feedback.

UA's Absence and Class Attendance Accommodation Policy

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>.

The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>. To request a disability-related accommodation to this attendance policy, please contact the Disability Resource Center at (520) 621-3268 or drc-info@email.arizona.edu.

If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in your courses, the Dean of Students Office is a central support resource for all students and may be helpful.

The Dean of Students Office is located in the Robert L. Nugent Building, room 100, or call 520-621-7057.

Code of Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, submitting an item of academic work that has previously been submitted or simultaneously submitted, and unauthorized resales of course materials are strictly prohibited. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies/code-academic-integrity> and <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

Accessibility and Accommodations

At the University of Arizona, we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, <https://drc.arizona.edu/>) to establish reasonable accommodations.

Threatening Behavior Policy

Civility is essential to any meaningful and productive exchange of ideas. Anyone observed engaging in any disruptive activity will be asked to cease this behavior. Rude, excessively sarcastic, obscene, or disrespectful comments will be considered disruptive. Those who continue to disrupt the online collaborative environment will be asked to leave and reported to the Dean of Students office. The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

UA Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy

Discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, and gender identity are prohibited by University policies and the federal law and will not be tolerated in this classroom. The policy also prohibits retaliation for opposing discriminatory conduct, filing a discrimination-related complaint, or participating in the investigation of a discrimination-related complaint.

I am required by University policies to report any form of gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator, UAPD, or the Dean of Students Office. If you or someone you know experience or have concerns for sexual harassment or violence, there are other confidential options for reporting and seeking help:

- Ron Wilson, Vice President & Title IX Coordinator, Division of Equity, Inclusion & Title IX, titleix@email.arizona.edu, (520) 621-7286.
- Janis C. Gallego, Deputy Director, Office of Title IX, Division of Equity, Inclusion & Title IX, janisgallego@email.arizona.edu, (520) 833-6214.
- Counseling and Psych Services at Student Health Center, (520) 621-3334.
- UA Campus Police, Call 911 or use one of the blue campus emergency phones, or call the TIP line at (520) 621-8477, which is “where individuals can report incidents of harassment or other criminal activity that has occurred on campus”.
- Southern Arizona Center Against Sexual Assault (off-campus rape crisis center), 24-hr Sexual Assault Crisis Lines: (520) 327-7273 or (800) 400-1001.

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>.

Confidentiality of Student Records

University policies related to the confidentiality of student records (e.g., FERPA) can be found at: <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/personal-information/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-1974-ferpa?topic=ferpa>.

Preferred Gender Pronoun

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct instructors on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly in class or via email (instructor email). If you wish to change your preferred name or pronoun in the UAccess system, please use the following guidelines:

- **Preferred name:** University of Arizona students may choose to identify themselves within the University community using a preferred first name that differs from their official/legal name. A student’s preferred name will appear instead of the person’s official/legal first name in select University-related systems and documents, provided that the name is not being used for the purpose of misrepresentation. Students are able to update their preferred names in UAccess.

- **Pronouns:** Students may designate pronouns they use to identify themselves. Instructors and staff are encouraged to use pronouns for people that they use for themselves as a sign of respect and inclusion. Students are able to update and edit their pronouns in UAccess.

More information on updating your preferred name and pronouns is available on the Office of the Registrar site at <https://www.registrar.arizona.edu>.

Additional Resources for Students

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policies>.

- **Campus Health.** <http://www.health.arizona.edu/>. Campus Health provides quality medical and mental health care services through virtual and in-person care. Phone: 520-621-9202
- **Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS).** <https://health.arizona.edu/counseling-psych-services>. CAPS provides mental health care, including short-term counseling services. Phone: 520-621-3334.
- **The Dean of Students Office's Student Assistance Program.** <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance>. Student Assistance helps students manage crises, life traumas, and other barriers that impede success. The staff addresses the needs of students who experience issues related to social adjustment, academic challenges, psychological health, physical health, victimization, and relationship issues, through a variety of interventions, referrals, and follow up services. Email: DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu. Phone: 520-621-7057.
- **Survivor Advocacy Program.** <https://survivoradvocacy.arizona.edu/>. The Survivor Advocacy Program provides confidential support and advocacy services to student survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The Program can also advise students about relevant non-UA resources available within the local community for support. Email: survivoradvocacy@email.arizona.edu. Phone: 520-621-5767.