This seminar explores the problems entailed in the social scientific analysis of work and labor in the context of the global economy. Topics include: the increasing variety of labor processes; the impact of organizational revolutions of the firm on work experiences and the changing nature of labor markets. Special attention is paid to the impact of changing labor processes on women and minors. The role of workplace discipline on workers’ characters and sentiments is also explored.

I have ordered some of the monographs featured throughout the syllabus at Book Culture/ Labyrinth Books, 536 West 112th Street, New York, NY 10025:

Two written assignments are expected. One is a small analytical summary or two of the case study from among the monographs listed in the syllabus. Summaries will be circulated to the rest of the seminar, and you will give a short précis of your findings in class.

The second is a longer piece, the type and topic of which is negotiable. IN the past students have done drafts of possible thesis proposals, term papers, and shorter, thematic essays.

If you don’t have a background in classical social theory as it pertains to work and labor, the following excerpts might be useful:


Marx, *Capital I, Part V*: “The Production of Absolute and of Relative Surplus Value” and *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. Or shorten the process by seeing excerpts such as “Exploitation,” “Labor


**Seminar Outline**

**August 29: Introduction**

**September 5: Writing about Labor**

George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (any edition).

**September 12: Reflecting on Work**


**September 19 & 26: Labor Markets**


October 3. 10. & 17: Labor Processes


Monographs:

Steve Striffler, *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America’s Favorite Food*, (Yale UP, 2005).


**October 24: The Flexibility Debate: Deskilling-Reskilling and the Uncertain Status of Workers from Professional and White Collar to Blue Collar Workers**


**October 31: Globalization and Labor**


**Monographs:**


November 7: Ethnicity and Exploitation


Monographs:


November 14: Youth and Children


November 21 &28: The Division of Labor and Gender


Monographs:


December 5: Work Sentiments and Structures


Monographs:


**December 12: Economic Consequences of the New Global Division of Labor**


