

Open Sessions for the 2018 Society for Socialist Studies Meetings

Please take a look at the session abstracts below and consider making a recommendation to the program committee about scheduling your paper as part of a particular session. Use the paper application form to make your recommendation.

Title of session: *A Giant on the shoulders of Giants: Marx's influential intellectual antecedents*

Session Organizer: Belton, Adam R.

Abstract:

This year marks Marx's birthday bicentennial. The naissance of his life's work analyzing the capitalist social order requires revisiting the impact of antecedent intellectuals upon his critique. We may re-examine well-known influences from Hegel and Feuerbach, but also less often explored interactions with the writings of Locke, Smith, Proudhon, Darwin, and Goethe. This session invites submissions relating to Marx's dialogues with his predecessors and contemporaries, and how they influenced his theoretical analysis of capitalism. Explorations of Marx's reactions to the societal events of the late 18th and early 19th centuries will also provide useful context for his viewpoints on society.

Title of session: *Corporate Power, Fossil Capital, Climate Crisis*

Session Organizer: Carroll, William

Abstract:

This session explores the intersections between (a) networks, structures and practices of capitalist class power (and resistance to it), as centered in large corporations; (b) the political economy of fossil capital as a way of life that has reached global scale; and (c) the accelerating climate crisis, whose urgency seems to be matched by its intractability at least within the strictures of capitalism itself. Papers should address all three of these concerns, but can focus on any of a range of power modalities, including the following: corporate networks and elites, corporate ownership and control, the financing of fossil capital, corporate social responsibility discourses, think tanks and corporate advocacy, business activism and lobbying, soft denialism and green capitalism, or carbon energy commodity chains.

Title of session: *Activism Against the Academy: Critical Reflections on Activist Ethnographies*

Session Organizers: Clancy, Devin; Hastings, Colin

Abstract:

This session invites contributions from researchers who employ ethnography to advance activist struggles. Such work may be broadly defined as engaged activist research, activist scholarship, participatory research, or community-based research. We especially encourage reflections on ethnographic projects conducted as part of grassroots anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, abolitionist, feminist, anarchist, socialist, and harm-reduction organizing among others. Participants may engage with questions such as: How can researchers effectively mobilize ethnographic findings to advance activist projects? How might ethnographers navigate the disparate expectations of the neoliberal academy and activist organizations? What particular activist ethnographic strategies have been most productive in your work?

Title of session: *Futures of Feminisms**

Session Organizer: Coburn, Elaine

Abstract:

This interdisciplinary session invites critical reflections about the futures of feminisms, in theory and in everyday practices. Contributors may draw on historical analyses that inform possible feminist futures or map contemporary fields of feminisms -- queer, Indigenous, intersectional, trans, global South, socialist, eco-feminist and more -- as entry points into imagining ways towards feminist futures. What challenges do feminist futures face? And what might the futures of feminisms look like, in all their tensions and contradictions but also liberatory possibilities.

* please email paper proposal for *Futures of Feminisms* session to:
congressinterfeminisms@gmail.com

Title of session: *Reconciliation and Calls to Action: Feminist Responses and Responsibilities**

Session Organizer: Coburn, Elaine

Abstract:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's ninety-four Calls to Action requires engaged and committed responses across a broad spectrum of institutions and communities. In this interdisciplinary session, presenters are invited to engage with specific Calls and consider what this means in terms of the rights of Indigenous women and the responsibilities of non-

Indigenous women. Analyses that critically engage with the TRC are welcome, to contextualize the TRC within a particular historical moment or consider how the TRC may be useful—and sometimes challenging—to achieving social justice for Indigenous women. Finally, papers may analyse the relationship between the TRC and movements by Indigenous women towards decolonization and Indigenous resurgence.

* please email paper proposal for the *Reconciliation and Calls to Action* session to: congressinterfeminisms@gmail.com

Title of session: *From corporate power to climate justice: Towards an agenda for transformation*

Session Organizer: Daub, Shannon

Abstract:

This session explores the question of what is to be done about the fossil fuel industry as a source of obstruction to urgent and interrelated efforts to address climate change, realize of Indigenous Rights and Title, and democratize energy systems. It is hosted by the Corporate Mapping Project, a partnership investigating the role and power of the fossil fuel industry. As the partnership approaches its midpoint, we are turning our attention increasingly to solutions. The session considers various avenues for challenging corporate power, including institutional and political reforms; Indigenous resurgence and land-based rights; citizen- and social movement-led resistance; efforts based in law; and/or the development of alternative visions that challenge carboniferous capitalism itself.

Title of session: *Appropriation, Displacement & Social Reproduction*

Session Organizer: Desai, Radhika

Abstract:

The annual GERG Panel discusses major flashpoints in the world's geopolitical economy. Today, they include Syria, Yemen, Venezuela, North Korea, Ukraine, and others. We welcome presentations on one or more of these or others that reflect on the rapidly changing configuration of world affairs in which western dominance is giving way to ever greater multipolarity.

Title of Session: *Global Environmental Change: A Challenge to a Better Society?*

Session Organizer: Diaz, Harry

Abstract:

The Anthropocene has been defined as the period in which humans are a dominant force in controlling and shaping the natural environment. Living in the Anthropocene poses new questions about the future of humanity and requires new ways of thinking and acting. Global environmental change is certainly pushing us closer and closer to ecological limits that could only produce increasing risks and scarcities. In this context is it possible to imagine and implement a more just society? Is it still feasible to think that modernity could create the conditions for a better society? The panel invites papers that could contribute to our understanding of the impacts that GEC may have for our goals to improve social conditions, better democracy and development of a sustainable and fair economy.

Title of session: *Access as Social Movement: The Ideology of Participatory Research with Youth*

Session Organizer: Elias, Paula V.

Abstract:

There is an emerging body of participatory projects involving young people, including youth participatory action research (YPAR). Many of these projects employ “critical” language around consciousness and praxis for social change. I will address the ideology within these participatory efforts, where young people are organized in efforts to access, rather than radically challenge, existing social-material relations of their locale. I draw upon my MA research interviewing young people, educators, and graduate researchers collaborating in YPAR projects and drawing upon critical traditions that don’t articulate or engage with an analysis of class relations, shaping the praxis and possibilities within their work.

Title of session: *What Would Democratic Consultation Look Like?*

Session Organizer: Fletcher, Amber

Abstract:

The proposed roundtable examines the possibilities and alternatives for more effective public engagement on women’s and gender issues in Canada. Based on a current SSHRC-funded project entitled “Engendering Public Engagement, Democratizing Public Space”, the roundtable will begin with a brief commentary on what made the 1968-1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women one of the most successful public consultations. The organisers will present insights from the SSHRC project’s five pilot exercises across the country. Participants with experience of other consultations are encouraged to join us to explore what a truly democratic public engagement process could look like.

Title of session: *Media, Art and Imagining Socialism*

Session Organizer: Forsyth, Scott

Abstract:

Open to papers on media and the arts and imagining a future socialism. Open to a range of radical perspectives – feminist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist. Relationship to socialist and radical politics, socialist parties and states and social movements. Impact of the changing political economy of the media and new media technologies. Historical or contemporary explorations of radical cultural politics in any national context. Analysis and interpretation of works of art in any media and period. Classic or contemporary theoretical debates in radical and Marxist aesthetics. Emphasis could focus on radical cultural possibilities or critiques of dominant media.

Title of session: *Appropriation, Displacement & Social Reproduction*

Session Organizer: Fridell, Mara

Abstract:

How does the worker get to work? How do societies reproduce in the midst of structural class conflict? Why, where, and when are divided and hobbled workers, and discounted nature, more motivational than profit? As exploitation is the engine spark of capitalist accumulation, so appropriation is its essential fuel and ground. The Appropriation, Displacement & Social Reproduction panel convenes, compares, and advances socialist-feminist, anti-colonial and anti-imperial, and socio-ecological research and theory on how and why alienation and dislocation, power maldistribution, and human developmental inequality and stunting are exploited, embedded, and enforced as necessary mechanisms redistributing credit, cooperation, and costs, forging and re-forging global capitalist relations and institutions in global capitalism, including in those regions and times where profits are not reinvested productively.

Title of session: *Social Change and Musical Work*

Session Organizer: Hersch, Rick A.

Abstract:

In what ways can musical performance and/or songwriting contribute to our work for social justice? In what ways has neoliberal political economy both motivated and constrained the possibilities for socially conscious musical appreciation? How do politically conscious musicians produce their creative labour? Does public schooling remain a site for music educators to advance socially just understandings? Is insurgent music an effective way to

support the mission of social movements? These are some of the questions which provoke the research and writing of the panelists for this session.

Title of session: *Challenges for the Canadian-Ukrainian Left in Canada*

Session Organizer: Hornosty, Jennie

Abstract:

With roots in the Ukrainian Labour Temple founded in 1918, the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians in Canada (AUUC) constitutes the progressive wing of the Ukrainian ethnic group in Canada. Today, these progressive voices are seldom heard. Instead a highly influential anti-communist group of ethnic Ukrainians push their agendas, like the creation of the Memorial to the Victims of Communism in Ottawa.

This session will discuss the legacy of the AUUC, its challenges and what role progressive ethnic Ukrainians can play in this climate of a new 'cold war' and the villainization of socialism and communism.

Title of session: *The Media, Trumpism, and Liberalism Collide in the 21st Century*

Session Organizer: Hulbert, Margot

Abstract:

The media reflects an institutional expression of thoughts, ideas, and issues in society. For over a century, the Supreme Court of Canada has protected the rights of the media to be free from influence and control of the government. Now in the 21st century new social processes create a complex, institutional landscape where conflicting and diverse interests are represented in varying degrees and manners. The media has also expanded from newspapers, magazines, into new media platforms and practices becoming multi-national and global in scope. This panel broaches questions such as: How in the 21st century are the voices of diverse Canadian and American perspectives represented, or not in the media? Has the ultra-conservative media created a hegemonic apparatus that has levelled a successful long-range multi-front assault on liberalism? What are the countervailing media practices and processes opposing this multi-front assault?

Title of session: *Climate Change and the Construction of Risk*

Session Organizer: Hulbert, Margot

Abstract:

Commitments made in Paris pursuant to the UNFCCC to limit the world to below 2 degrees C will require sustained and substantial commitment from nations and all levels of government and people. Climate modeling predicts increasingly severe impacts of extreme weather events (including droughts, floods, storms, and rising sea levels). In order to meet Paris commitments climate modelers are relying on significant technological change including negative emission technologies, carbon capture and storage, nuclear energy and behavioural change. How do the construction of climate change and technological risks and the agency of individual actors interact? What constructions and decision processes will be necessary, and how can these processes be studied to advance a carbon free future?

Title of session: *Reconciling Social Justice and Truth*

Session Organizer: Hulbert, Margot

Abstract:

Social justice epitomizes the achievement of justice and fairness in relation to access to and the distribution of Society's resources, recognition, procedural, and substantive justice. These goals have recently been juxtaposed against claims of free speech, freedom of religion, thought, intellectual curiosity, and academic freedom. Papers in this session will deconstruct these arguments, propose alternate framings and provide possible resolutions. Do solutions to the current conundrum require deep deliberations surrounding truth, truthiness, and post truth? Do such exercises pursue new conceptions of justice, or are these age-old arguments between qualitative and quantitative science in slightly new, different framings? All papers pursuing constructive deliberation and debate are welcome.

Title of session: *Overcoming Schisms in Socialism*

Session Organizer: McMahon, Sean; Rein, Sandra

Abstract:

Schisms have long defined socialist relations and processes and their expression in ideas, from Marx and Bakunin through to dialecticians and "non-bullshit Marxists," to autonomists and neo-Marxists and the Frankfurt School. Recalling that in Doctor Zivago Pasternak observes that "[p]rogress in science is governed by the laws of repulsion, every step forward is made by refutation of prevalent errors and false theories," this panel seeks papers that productively use repulsion between scholars and/or tendencies in the socialist tradition to create new scientific

analyses of our changing historic moment. Papers expressing combinations of acutely incompatible or seemingly irreconcilable socialist ideas are particularly encouraged.

Title of session: *The "Alt.Right" and Its Utilization of "Free Speech" Discourse*

Session Organizer: Potter, Garry

Abstract:

The New Far Right has increasingly and frequently quite successfully used a discourse concerning free speech, and sometimes even academic freedom, to advance their political agendas and also to discredit universities (for examples as being suppressors of free speech left wing thought police) in the eyes of the general public. There has been a disturbing blurring of discursive lines between those of the far right and those of the mainstream media, as became quite apparent, for example, in the Wilfrid Laurier University issue(s). This session asks for papers analysing this phenomenon and also considerations for what should be appropriate and effective socialist responses.

Title of session: *Abolitionist Politics Today*

Session Organizer: Shantz, Jeff

Abstract:

This session invites papers addressing aspects of the developing theories and practices of contemporary movements for criminal justice system abolition. Papers may address any focus of abolition, for example prison abolition, police abolition, anti-statism, etc., as well as specific community based projects. Papers focusing on alternatives to statist criminal justice are also welcomed.

Title of session: *On Punitive Accumulation: Carceral Political Economies Today*

Session Organizer: Shantz, Jeff

Abstract:

This session invites papers that analyse developing structures and processes of punitive accumulation and the political economies of criminal justice system practices. Of particular focus are re/deployments of resources by governments, connections of government with local businesses, and the carceral infrastructures and practices established as mechanisms of containment, regulation, repression, and exploitation in the context of current transformations in neoliberal democracies.

Title of session: *Canadian Copyright: Understanding the Problem, Seeking Solutions. Publisher's Perspective*

Session Organizer: Sharpe, Errol

Abstract:

In the last five years there's been lots of conflict in the academic community around copyright. Many champion open access, while publishers and authors decry the decline in their earnings for use of their material. Those of us who are small, independent publishers in Canada are torn between our objective to see as many readers as possible reading our books, and our need to generate the revenues that pay for our publishing activity. The supreme court ruling against the practices of York University opens the debate around copyright. The panel will analyze these issues and propose a way forward.

Title of session: *Post Politics of Mitigation in Canada – Delimiting Posts*

Session Organizer: Shuba, Curtis J.

Abstract:

The prominent strategies being promoted in Canada for mitigating the extent of climate change exist solely within the bounds of a capitalist mode of production (e.g., carbon pricing, cap and trade, carbon capture, consumer choice). This conveys a clear delineation of what constitutes “acceptable” strategies and fetishizes CO2. Can the existing approaches of political economy in Canada account for this, or do we need re-examine our theoretical frameworks to include a post-political understanding?

Title of session: *The Politics of Treaty Interpretation and the Tasks of Inheritance*

Session Organizer: Snelgrove, Corey J.

Abstract:

Ignored within socialism and CPE, this panel suggests the relevance of treaty interpretation to the Left. Aimée Craft interrogates a possessive approach to treaties that works under the sign of reconciliation to justify extraction. Snelgrove presents a critique of CPE from the standpoint of treaty. Gina Starblanket asks how Indigenous peoples might move towards forms of political identity, action and organizing that embody the spirit and animate the intent of treaties. Heidi Stark shows how the interpretation of treaties by higher courts detaches Indigenous political authority from territory and citizens to particular cultural practices serving to legitimize colonial expansion through land acquisition.

Title of session: *Migrant Workers and Social Reproduction of Capitalism*

Session Organizer: Stevens, Andrew

Abstract:

Over the last decade the Canadian government has recruited and accepted a growing number of foreign workers. Programs like the Temporary Foreign Worker program have constructed labour markets for low-wage industries in social reproductive work – for example in care-giving and in accommodation and food services sectors. In this session, papers examine the impacts on workers in these low-paid social- reproductive sectors and how this labour has become essential to contemporary capitalism.

Title of session: *Intellectual Labour: Academe as Commodity*

Session Organizer: Thompson, Chad D.

Abstract:

Alfred Sohn-Rethel, a figure at the margins of the Frankfurt School, towards the end of his career published his life's work, *Intellectual and Manual Labour*. In this work, Sohn-Rethel sought to understand the status of the products of intellectual labour in the context of the commodity. What might this mean today? What becomes of traditional knowledge within academe? Can – or should - Enlightenment insistence on the unity of teaching and research be maintained? What are the implications of the “adjunctification” of higher education for scholarship? This session invites proposals on any aspect of intellectual labour and commodification.
