Open Panels

Let's make this world impossible: Radical possibilities of pedagogy

Sites of learning, whether within social movements, communities, or institutions can be catalysts for re-organizing ourselves and the world collectively. This session invites papers to share encounters with pedagogy that push beyond capitalist desiring and instead further our longings for communal futures. We look to pedagogies of risk and failure and not always knowing, pedagogies of dissent, pedagogies within and also against.

We find this in popular education that elucidates the political moment through dialogic and militant inquiry led by both teacher and students. Munir Fasheh explains how community education supports Palestinians and other oppressed peoples in their liberation by providing space for community grounded theory and action. There is also inspiration in the autonomous Marxism and Black radicalism of Stephano Harney and Fred Moten's prefigurative para-educational spaces of study, fugitivity, and co-operation. And within social movements, education and action are co-constituted (Choudry & Vally, 2019), offering opportunities for radical public pedagogy and knowledge for archives of social action.

Contact: Sheri Ostapovitch, University of Toronto (sherry.ostapovitch@mail.utoronto.ca)

Femme Acts: Bad Girls for Settler Dissolution

This panel works through longstanding gendered coercions, intimately felt and embodied in all our relations, that condition histories of settler colonial Canada, in Turtle Island's contemporary life. In this domain can be made queer response to coercion, what I call that of the dissolute femme. The panel calls for work embodying femme refusals and restaging, for prefiguring conceptual, aesthetic, relational and performative dissolution of what Aileen Moreton-Robinson calls "whiteness as property," what Alexander Wehelyie names racial "surplus value of the human,"[1] to end capitalism and settler genocide on Indigenous lands.

[1] Alexander Weheliye, Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014, 226.

Contact: Jessica Jacobson-Konefall, University of Lethbridge (j.jacobsonkonefall@uleth.ca)

Eco-socialism Today: Prospects and Challenges

Although kinetic warfare, the eclipse of American hegemony, looming financial meltdown and other elements of global capitalism's organic crisis have to some extent displaced climate breakdown from the headlines of mainstream media, that breakdown is accelerating visibly. This session invites papers that take up the prospects and challenges for eco-socialist projects, whether in Canada or in the wider global context. How are left movements and parties forwarding eco-socialism in the current conjuncture? How can such initiatives effectively oppose the continuing power of fossil capitalism along with emergent projects like Climate Capitalism and eco-fascism, while seeking common ground internationally with such developments as

Ecological Civilization in China? Papers addressing these issues, whether through theoretical analysis or empirical investigation, are welcome in this session.

Contact: Bill Carroll, University of Victoria (wcarroll@uvic.ca)

Fear, Terror and Security from the Arctic to the Americas

Security, Marx observed, is the supreme concept of bourgeois society, and liberal states now increasingly govern crisis through securitisation and pacification. Under the 2025 "Trump Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, sovereign territory from Venezuela to the Arctic is no longer immune to extraterritorial policing. The Nordic welfare state builds closed departure centres, strict permit regimes and tuition walls, and rents prison cells abroad. Selected threats are manufactures and stiffened into lasting powers of classification, surveillance, custody and exclusion. This session treats pacification, the fabrication of social order against an elusive and shifting "universal adversary" (Neocleous), as a defining governing rationale of the present. Racial capitalism sorts its human material along racialised and classed lines; liberal universalism shelters the compliant insider while state violence disciplines the non-citizen and the unruly poor. This session also asks what forms of dissent and intervention remain available, within the university and in society at large.

Contact: Armando Garcia (armando.research@proton.me); Kevin Walby (k.walby@uwinnipeg.ca), University of Winnipeg

Classical Marxist Theory: Contemporary readings and relevancies

Classical Marxist theory informed the practice of socialist revolutions in the 20th century and continues to inform practice in socialist countries. This session seeks papers that explore how historical materialism, as developed by Marx and Engels, and further elaborated by Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky, Gramsci, Mao and others, enables an interpretation of the contemporary world that can guide efforts at revolutionary change. We welcome papers that explore the analytic and strategic power of Marx's dialectical method in illuminating contemporary issues in light of key concepts such as base and superstructure, mode/forces/relations of production, class struggle, state and capital, uneven development and imperialism, social (re)production and ideology, and the dynamics of accumulation and crisis. Equally, we welcome papers that address the theory/practice dialectic from the other side, exploring how the classical canon can not only inform struggle in the real world but be revitalized by it, such that we discover new meanings and possibilities in old texts. How can historical materialism, operating in both directions, continue to develop as a living, breathing, evolving tradition of critical thought and action?

Contact: Bill Carroll, University of Victoria (wcarroll@uvic.ca); Peter Gose, Carleton University (peter.gose@gmail.com)

Western Marxism and its Discontents

Fifty years ago, Perry Anderson characterized Western Marxism as a sophisticated product of political isolation and defeat (1976: 42). More recent assessments have been harsher, denouncing its rejection of materialism and political economy in favour of philosophy and

cultural analysis, its ties to Western intelligence agencies, and above all its hostility to actually-existing socialisms and anti-imperialist struggles (Losurdo 2024, Rockhill 2025, Foster and Rockhill 2025). Increasingly synonymous with retreat from struggle into comfortable but irrelevant academic niches in the imperial superstructure, Western Marxism has fallen into ill repute, even in its own eyes, to the point where denouncing Western Marxism is arguably now the new Western Marxism itself.

We invite panelists to engage constructively with debates over Western Marxism, not as a contest of despair but as a search for ways out of its impasses. If a lack of revolutionary struggle in the West has been the underlying problem, is Western Marxism a cause or a symptom? How does the West's industrial decline alter the balance of forces that created Western Marxism? Has Western Marxism contributed anything useful (such as hegemony theory) to overcoming its own disempowerment? If revolutionary prospects are greater in the Global South, is that because Western working classes are the structurally corrupted beneficiaries of unequal exchange or should the explanation be political? What can Marxists in the West learn from non-Western and non-Marxist struggles to be more effective in our work? Is imperialism the primary contradiction of our times, or can it only be overcome by class struggle at home? Papers that discuss these and related questions are welcome in this session.

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WHO GETS TO DREAM? Black Imagination, Mental Health, and the Politics of Dissent

Who Gets to Dream? examines Black imagination as more than creativity or aspiration: as a site of resistance, psychological possibility, cultural memory, and dissent. The session asks how anti-Blackness, economic inequality, institutional exclusion, and inherited narratives of possibility shape not only material conditions, but our capacity to imagine what a life, community, or future might become.

Black communities are frequently described through the language of resilience: celebrated for surviving conditions they should never have been required to endure. This session asks what lies beyond resilience. What changes when the goal is no longer simply to become more resilient within harmful systems, but to question those systems, refuse the limitations they reproduce, and create the conditions in which different futures can be imagined?

Bringing together perspectives from artists, scholars, mental-health practitioners, cultural workers, educators, activists, and community organizers, the session invites contributions exploring the intersections of Black life, mental health, imagination, power, culture, and social transformation. Contributions might consider how racism and structural inequality shape psychological possibility; art and cultural practice as spaces for dissent; collective care and community as sites of resistance; the politics of rest, joy, and dreaming; or the role of imagination in movements seeking structural change.

Rather than remaining solely in an analysis of oppression, Who Gets to Dream? seeks to move from constraint to interrogation, imagination, and possibility. It asks participants to consider what institutions, communities, cultural practices, and movements would need to transform for marginalized people not simply to survive existing conditions, but to participate meaningfully in imagining and building what comes next.

At its centre is a simple provocation: What if one of the most consequential forms of dissent is refusing to inherit the limits of someone else's imagination?

Contact: TIKA Simone, Global Leaders Institute (tikathetrillionaire@proton.me)

Subverting expectations in an age of Artificial Intelligence: Technological Anarchy, Artificial Democracy and Intelligent Society

Many debates within socio-political academic circles often sound the alarm on artificial intelligence (AI) and rightfully so. AI is damaging economic traditions, challenging traditional positions of power, encroaching on education, adding to joblessness and harming the environment. However, AI is sometimes understood as and used to circumvent positions of power, capitalist economies and creating labour opportunities. Activists, scholars and tech enthusiasts use AI in ways their creators never intended. They circumvent traditional power through land-based localization and put AI potential in the hands of everyday people instead of a powerful few. While we must remain vigilant of AI's potential to harm our planet (especially environmental), we can remain open to the possibility that AI systems and programs can be powerful tools for the masses to mobilize, democratize and develop hope for an open and socialist future. This open session seeks to engage in critical dialogue concerning approaches to AI design and implementation that undermines corporate expectations, political domination and economic norms through novel research creation methodologies. We will discuss how AI is not a tool to be feared but a tool to be taken and used against its powerful creators, investors and political backers.

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At the Intersections of Culture and Anti-Colonial Resistance

This session invites papers on the intersections between social movement cultures and the expansion of anti-colonial politics. In particular, this session seeks to consider the relationship between anti-authoritarian/anti-state movement cultures and the recurrent context of settler colonialism and Indigenous resurgence. How do radical social movements respond to the settler colonial context in which they find themselves? How is this incorporated into both theory and practice? What are the key tensions that arise and how do movement participants seek to work on them? How do ongoing forms of Indigenous resurgence politics disrupt and problematize movement practices and approaches? What theoretical or critical tools might be employed in the study of such cultures and movements in order to support effective forms of resistance? This session invites dialogues on these questions with the aim to enhance the possibilities for wider and more committed forms of anti-colonial movement politics.

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