The Fight for Time: Day Laborers and Political Uprising under Neoliberalism.  
May 15 2015

Institute for Social Justice Seminar Series

Location:
Date:  Friday May 15  
Time:  2pm to 4pm  
Venue:  Australian Catholic University,  
Council Room - Level 11, Tenison Woods House,  
8-20 Napier Street, North Sydney

Speaker: Paul Apostolidis

Abstract
This talk explores what we can learn about neoliberalism, its temporal dynamics, and its vulnerabilities to opposition by considering the situation of Latin American migrant day laborers in the United States today. Rethinking neoliberal time from the margins, I examine day laborers’ experiences and discourses regarding everyday time, precarious work, and the vulnerable body. I argue that the social themes articulated by these exceedingly marginalized workers not only reflect exceptional forms of domination but also serve as synecdoches for formations of neoliberal power that influence multitudes. Launching effective resistance against neoliberal time thus depends on developing political and intellectual initiatives that respond to both these dimensions of power. It requires activating temporally attuned dialogue among precarious workers and better-situated social groups, especially concerning “postwork” political imaginaries and the global deportation regime. Widely dispersed constituencies have key stakes in day laborers' struggles, even though the adversities and rebellions of these figures on society’s fringes might seem of little importance for broad-scale efforts to combat neoliberalism. This analysis derives from a methodologically innovative experiment in what I call "critical-popular research." My inquiry draws on extensive interviews with day laborers, participant observation at urban worker centers in the Pacific Northwest, and interviews with national day labor movement leaders throughout the US. I critically adapt this approach from Paulo Freire’s theory of popular education as a way to involve migrant workers in the very core of social critique – and to equip theory to struggle against the implication of its own concepts and categories in entrenched patterns of social domination.

Bio
Paul Apostolidis is Professor and T. Paul Endowed Chair of Political Science at Whitman College. He has authored Breaks in the Chain: What Immigrant Workers Can Teach America about Democracy (University of Minnesota Press, 2010) and Stations of the Cross: Adorno and Christian Right Radio (Duke University Press, 2000); he co-edited Public Affairs: Politics in the Age of Sex Scandals (Duke University Press, 2004). Prof. Apostolidis is currently writing a book on migrant day laborers, popular education, and neoliberal time, which is under review with Oxford University Press. He serves on the Executive Editorial Board of the journal Political Theory and his articles have appeared in Constellations, Theory & Event, Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society, Philosophy & Social Criticism, Contemporary Political Theory, Journal of Political Power, Political Research Quarterly, and Politics, Groups & Identities. Prof. Apostolidis is also the founder and director of Whitman College's nationally recognized community-based research program on The State of the State for Washington Latinos (www.walatinos.org). Prof. Apostolidis grew up near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; he received his Ph.D. and M.A. from Cornell University and his bachelor’s degree from Princeton University.

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