THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE
COLLEGE OF LAW

ClassCrits VIII
Emerging Coalitions: Challenging the Structures of Inequality

Call For Papers and Participation

Sponsored by the University of Tennessee College of Law

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In the past few months, new alliances have emerged on the progressive left, sparked in part by the shooting deaths of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and other young black men by police officers across the country. After grand jury decisions refused to issue indictments in the Brown and Garner cases, protests erupted across the country, in big cities and small towns alike. While New York City police turned their backs on Mayor Bill DeBlasio after he remarked that he trains his biracial son on how to interact with the police, labor leader Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO, noted that both Brown's mother and the police officer who killed her son are union members. He commented, "Our brother killed our sister's son and we do not have to wait for the judgment of prosecutors or courts to tell us how terrible this is."

Retail and fast food workers engaged in the "Fight for $15/Lucha Por $15" march wearing "I Can't Breathe" shirts, chanting, "Hands up, don't shoot." Across shared interests, community groups, students, and churches are increasingly supporting labor strikes and immigrant rights, among others. Reverend Dr. William Barber II of the N.A.A.C.P., a leader of North Carolina's "Moral Mondays" movement, explains, "We recognize that the intersectionality of all these movements is our opportunity to fundamentally redirect America."

These new alliances have emerged in an era of heightened economic vulnerability and precarity for the 99 percent. The economy has begun to recover from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, yet workers continue to struggle as wages stagnate and labor rights are openly violated and legislatively curtailed. Students in higher education and their families continue to be weighed down by interest-bearing loans. State and federal legislatures continue to cut fundamental components of the safety net. Meanwhile, Wall Street firms and the 1 percent grow ever richer. Wall Street continues to work with legislators to successfully weaken already weak financial regulation meant to protect the economy from systemic failure and fraud; while judicial decisions continue to empower corporatization of elections by undermining campaign finance and other voting rights laws.

Thus, the Eighth ClassCrits conference will focus on efforts to combat injustice and inequality through coalitional praxis. ClassCrits VIII particularly seeks to engage activists and lawyers who believe their work should be informed by a deep understanding of the limitations and potential of current legal and institutional structures, as academics and activists alike strive to energize and mobilize our many communities to participate and build coalitions for progressive social change.

We invite panel proposals, roundtable discussion proposals, and paper presentations that speak to this year's theme, as well as to general ClassCrits themes. We are also interested in receiving proposals from law clinicians who engage in activist lawyering as a core part of their curriculum design. See the following page for details.

Finally, we extend a special invitation to junior scholars (i.e., graduate students and non-tenured faculty members) to submit proposals for works in progress. At least one senior scholar, as well as other ClassCrits scholars, will provide feedback and detailed commentary upon each work in progress in a small, supportive working session at this year's workshop.

Possible Topics – Emerging Coalitions: Challenging the Structures of Inequality

Theory and Action – Questions

- How are various forms of inequality interconnected, and how might these links foster transformative coalitions and transformative law?
- What are the barriers to intersectional coalition-building, and how might coalitions be strengthened and maintained?
- How do neoliberal principles support inequality, and how can these principles be challenged?
- What are the advantages or disadvantages of particular critical theoretical frameworks, such as intersectionality, identity, class conflict, vulnerability, inequality, political economy, critical theory?
- What legal and institutional reforms might advance structural change?
- How can social movements better inform and support law and scholarship, and vice versa?
- Can critical coalitions be built on a global scale? What is the role of local action?
- How are new technologies empowering communities or exacerbating inequalities, and how is law involved?
- What is the relationship between the legal education "crisis" and increasing social inequality?
- What are the possibilities and challenges of social justice lawyering in critical coalitions for change?

Structures of Inequality – Problems and Solutions

- Mass incarceration, racialized policing, the criminal justice system.
- Criminalization of poverty, immigration status, and motherhood.
- Class, race, the environment, and climate change.
- Minimum wage, living wages, wage theft.
- Creditor and debtor issues, including student debt, bankruptcies, foreclosures.
- Under-development on a national and global scale.
- Economic security and the family.
- Poverty in place: rurality, exurbia, and the "right to the city."
- Food (in)justice, community agriculture, farming.
- Poverty, taxation, and the progressive redistributive possibilities of law.

In addition, we invite paper and panel proposals that speak to the general themes of ClassCrits, including:

- The legal and cultural project of constructing inequalities of all kinds as natural, normal, and necessary.
- The relationships among economic, racial, and gender inequality.
- The development of new methods (including the interdisciplinary study and development of such methods) with which to analyze and criticize economics and law (beyond traditional "law and economics").
- The relationship between material systems and institutions and cultural systems and institutions.
- The concept and reality of class within the international legal community, within international development studies and welfare strategies, and within a "flattening" world of globalized economics and geopolitical relations.

Proposal Submission Procedure and Deadline

Please submit your proposal by email to classcrits@gmail.com by May 22, 2015. Proposals should include the author's name, institutional affiliation and contact information, the title of the paper to be presented, and an abstract of the paper to be presented of no more than 750 words. Junior scholar submissions for works in progress should be clearly marked as "JUNIOR SCHOLAR WORK IN PROGRESS PROPOSAL."

The venue for the gathering is The University of Tennessee College of Law, Knoxville, Tennessee. The workshop will begin with continental breakfast on Friday, October 23 and continue through the afternoon of Saturday, October 24. Arrangements are being made for conference hotels. Please check our website, www.classcrits.org, for further updates.

The registration fee is $199.00 for all conference attendees who are full-time faculty members. Registration is free for students and activists. Participants who do not fit into these categories, and/or who for individual reasons cannot afford the registration fee, should contact us at classcrits@gmail.com. Workshop attendees are responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses.

Conference Organizing Committee

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About ClassCrits

ClassCrits is a network of scholars and activists interested in the critical, interdisciplinary and international analysis of law and economic relations. The global economic crisis, along with growing economic inequality and insecurity, suggests it is time to explore alternatives to the neoclassical or "free market" economic paradigm, often identified with the U.S.-origin "Law and Economics" movement. We aim to revive discussions of questions of class pushed to the margins or relegated to the shadowy past, considering the possible meaning and relevance of economic class to the contemporary context. We also hope to better integrate the rich diversity of economic and social sciences methods and theories into law by exploring and engaging non-neoclassical and heterodox economics. The name "ClassCrits" reflects our interest in focusing on economics through the lens of critical legal scholarship movements, such as critical legal studies, critical feminist theory, critical race theory, LatCrit, queer theory, and critical law and development theory. That is, we start with the assumption that economics in law is inextricably political and fundamentally tied to questions of systemic status-based subordination. Please visit our website at www.classcrits.org for more about ClassCrits.