

CALL FOR PAPERS & PARTICIPATION

ClassCrits V

From Madison to Zuccotti Park: Confronting Class and Reclaiming the American Dream

Sponsored by

University of Wisconsin Law School &
The Institute for Legal Studies, University of Wisconsin Law School

Madison, WI. * November 16-17, 2012

**Keynote Speaker: Professor Erik Olin Wright, Department of Sociology,
University of Wisconsin.**

This workshop, the fifth meeting of ClassCrits, takes on class and the American dream as its theme. The most quintessentially American trait may be our capacity to look past current misfortune and imagine a brighter future. Americans love a “rags to riches” story and have long believed that hard work and determination will pay off in the long run. Two years into a sluggish “recovery” from the Great Recession, however, many Americans have lost some of that earnest optimism. Faced with persistent unemployment, a nationwide foreclosure crisis, deep cuts to state and local budgets, and declining state support for public education, Americans are questioning the promise of upward mobility. Indeed falling backwards is now a recognized phenomenon affecting more and more of the “middle class,” arguably blurring the distinctions between the “middle class,” the “working classes” and “the poor. But roused by economic insecurity and the political assault on workers’ rights, “ordinary” people from Madison to Zuccotti Park have taken to the streets to voice their dissent. Taking on the slogan “we are the 99%,” the protest movement has launched a national dialogue about income, wealth and structural inequality, race, gender and class divisions in society, and, fundamentally, what it will take to reclaim our vision of a good life. *From Madison to Zuccotti Park: Confronting Class and Reclaiming the American Dream* will therefore bring together scholars, economists, activists, policymakers, and others to critically examine both the relationships between and the complexities of class and inequality.

We invite panel proposals and paper presentations that speak to *this year’s theme* as well as to general ClassCrits themes. See the following page for details.

In addition, we extend a special invitation to junior scholars to submit proposals for *works in progress*. Each work in progress will be commented upon by a senior scholar as well as other scholars in a small, supportive working session.

ClassCrits is a network of scholars and activists interested in critical 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. “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 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, and queer 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. www.classcrits.org

Possible Topics: From Madison to Zuccotti Park: Confronting Class and Reclaiming the American Dream

Constructing & Deconstructing the 99%
The Vanishing(ed) Middle-Class (family, housing, health care, education, income, employment, other)
Social Mobility—Falling Backwards
Gender Dynamics in Economic Downturns and Recoveries
The Role of Women & Women’s Issues in Protest Movements
Anti-Poverty Strategies
Mapping a Way Forward (strategies for change in general)
Political Failure (tax policy, immigration, labor & employment, welfare, other)
Politics 2012--Political Opportunity?
Structural Inequality (law, public health, education, other)
Conscious and Unconscious Animus Against Poor People (immigration, criminalization, family, other)
Spatial Inequality (segregation, rurality, surveillance)
W(h)ither the Social Safety Net? (welfare, bankruptcy, housing, food, other)
Class and Inequality: How are they different?
Exploring the Racial & Inter-Racial Impacts of Economic Downturns and Poverty
International Social & Economic Equality/Mobility (shared lessons and lessons to be learned)
Human Rights or Civil Rights?
The Great Tech Divide (in terms of race, gender, class, location [suburbs, cities, rural areas])

In addition, we invite 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 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.

LOGISTICS:

The venue for the gathering is The University of Wisconsin Law School. The workshop will begin with continental breakfast on Friday November 16 and continue through the afternoon of Saturday November 17. Arrangements are being made for conference hotels. Please check our website www.classcrits.org for further updates or email the conference planners.

FEES:

Attendees are responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE: (Contact any member with Questions).

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DEADLINE:

Please submit your proposal by email to classcrits@gmail.com by February 17, 2012