

CALL FOR PAPERS & PARTICIPATION

ClassCrits XI: Rising Together for Economic Hope, Power and Justice

Co-Sponsored by

West Virginia University College of Law
and ClassCrits www.classcrits.org

Morgantown, West Virginia
November 2-3, 2018

The current administration continues its reactionary campaign to “Make America Great Again” by rolling back progress in key areas of labor, environmental, health, and civil rights. A rising and brazen alt-right movement, with its calls for a white ethnostate, empowered by Trump’s victory, continues to grow ever more vocal at campuses across the country. Immigrants are being targeted for deportation, building on authority laid down by the past administrations. Trump’s saber rattling creates the real possibility of a military showdown between the US and North Korea. And the new federal tax law, fueled by plutocratic influence, will exacerbate income inequality by shifting even more money from working Americans to wealthy people and corporations.

How did we get here? The liberal technocratic class at the heart of the Democratic constituency was stunned at the election of Trump, despite a lackluster, campaign based on stale ideas. Despite all this, many were shocked the morning of November 9, 2016, not only because of Trump’s crass mannerisms and reactionary and divisive politics, but because he won against an anointed insider candidate with strong support from mainstream institutions.

What lessons emerge from Trump’s election? The Democrats seemed to have learned little from one of the most humiliating losses at the ballot box in American history, reiterating their centrism and calls for bipartisanship and value-free governance. Worse still, elites have doubled down on their politics of condescension, offering *What’s the Matter with Kansas* explanations pondering why working-class white workers voted against their own interest, without pausing to consider the elite neoliberal consensus that has alienated voters, providing them with little real choice at the ballot box.

Mainstream media outlets have looked for answers in the “economic anxiety” of the white working class, without much substantive analysis of what this means, or how the situation faced by millions of white and non-white Americans is the result of decades of bipartisan policy agreement in favor of austerity and a low-wage economy. Discontent with neoliberal globalization creates serious risks of a resurgent right organized around its own neo-nationalist agenda. But it also presents opportunities for new constituencies to form around concrete struggles such as Medicare for All, the Fight for Fifteen, investments in infrastructure and other public institutions that represent our democratic commons. We cannot afford to leave this in the hands of politicians who counter atavistic racial appeals and billionaire populism with the claim that “America is Already Great.” For a generation of young people facing stagnant wages, decreasing upward mobility, and an uncertain future, there needs to be a political agenda that speaks to their sense that things need to change fundamentally.

The good news is that we have seen a surge in democratic participation, including widespread and persistent political mobilization that succeeded in defeating efforts to repeal Obamacare. New progressive candidates are running for state and federal offices, much to the chagrin of Democratic gatekeepers. We have seen sporadic protests that attest to a growing dissatisfaction with the centrist status quo. Catalyzed by the movement for Black Lives, the West Virginia teacher's strike, the Women's March, the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, and the #MeToo movement, an unprecedented number of people are speaking up to challenge workplace sexual harassment, wage disparities, and other forms of patriarchal economic and social oppression. Now is the time to rethink issues of basic political economy to form the basis of a new politics that seeks to reduce inequality and wealth disparity, and reinvigorate civil rights protections for disadvantaged communities.

We invite participants to submit applications to present at the 11th Annual ClassCrits conference, to be held at West Virginia University College of Law. We invite panel proposals, roundtable discussion proposals, paper presentations, poetry and fiction reading, and art that speak to this year's theme, as well as to general ClassCrits themes. We also welcome 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

We invite panel proposals and paper presentations that speak to this year's theme of "economic hope, power and justice," as well as to general ClassCrits themes. See the following page for details.

In addition, we extend a special invitation to junior scholars (i.e., graduate students or any non-tenured faculty member) to submit proposals for *works in progress*. A senior scholar as well as other scholars will comment upon each work in progress in a small, supportive working session.

Proposal Submission Procedure and Deadline

Please submit your proposal by email to classcrits@classcrits.org by **June 1, 2018**. 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. You are also encouraged to submit entire panels to the conference. Junior scholar submissions for works in progress should be clearly marked as "**JUNIOR SCHOLAR WORK IN PROGRESS PROPOSAL**."

We invite panel proposals that speak to this year's theme of "economic hope, power and justice," as well the general ClassCrits themes, 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.

Logistics & Fees

The venue for the gathering is the West Virginia University College of Law in Morgantown, West Virginia, [see details here](#). The conference will begin with continental breakfast on Friday, November 2 and continue through the afternoon of Saturday, November 3. Arrangements are being made for conference hotels.

For updates, check www.classcrits.org, where you can also sign up as a ClassCrits member to be on our contact list and to post a profile that will build our network and showcase your work. Associate membership is free; full membership dues are \$25 for 2018 (includes ClassCrits, Inc. voting rights and 2018 conference discount).

The registration fee is \$215.00 for accepted presenters who are full-time faculty members; ClassCrits members get a discounted registration fee of \$200. 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@classcrits.org. Workshop attendees are responsible for their own travel and lodging expenses.

Who We Are

Eleven years ago, a group of scholar-activists organized a series of conversations about law and economic class. Building on "outsider" jurisprudence that has moved inequalities of race, gender, and sexuality from the margins to the center of law, the group proposed a jurisprudence of economic inequality. To foreground economic justice, the group sought to critique mainstream law and economics and to focus on the lives of poor and working-class people.

Rejecting the neoliberal ideology of scarcity, and reclaiming the possibilities presented by the commons and by collective action, ClassCrits was born. Our name "ClassCrits" reflects our ties to critical legal analysis and our goal of addressing economic class in the multiple intersecting forms of subordination. We confront the roots of economic inequality in divisions such as race and gender and in legal and economic systems destructive to the well-being of humanity and the planet.

Conference Planning Committee

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