

**Covid-19 and Care Work: An Oral History Approach**  
**Immersive Seminar/Fall B 2020**  
Barnard College/History Department  
DRAFT SYLLABUS

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Office Hours: Tuesday 4pm, Thursday 10am

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday: 2:10 – 4:00

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In this seminar students will conduct oral histories of essential service and care workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. They will develop a conceptual and theoretical framework for service and care work, interrogate the archive, discuss oral history as a methodological approach and historical source and will be trained in oral history, including the technical skills of preparing a consent form, formulating questions, using recording equipment, and transcribing interviews. The course will also grapple with the meaning and structure of the archive. How have archives been built? Whose voices are represented? What kinds of power are reflected in archival collections? Students will be contributing to building new archives through their oral history.

The unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 has generated widespread interest and concern about service workers, many of whom are in the care industry. While most of us are expected to stay home and stay safe, countless workers are preparing and delivering food, stocking supermarket shelves, caring for the children of essential workers, and taking care of the sick. There have been numerous gestures of gratitude, such as the 7:00 clap and public service announcements expressing appreciation for workers. Yet, many workers have not been provided with the necessary protective gear, are not adequately compensated or given paid sick leave, or do not have access to health insurance. The infection rate of health care workers has made visible the pressures on these workers and their simultaneous disposability. Through interviews, students will have a chance to learn who these workers are, their daily struggles and fears, and why they continue to do this work.

By examining the racialized and gendered history of care work in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, students will place their interviews in historical context. They will analyze organizing by African American domestic workers and interrogate the language of “care work” and what Arlie Hochschild called “emotional labor.” Students will consider how the notion of care has become a form of coercion making it difficult for workers to establish boundaries or make demands.

Each student will have to have an introductory meeting with their interviewee and schedule either an in-person or virtual interview. Follow-up interviews may be required as well. At the moment, Columbia University and Barnard College regulations prohibit in-person interviews, so interviews will likely be conducted virtually. If things change, we can discuss possibilities for in-person interviews. If the interviewee has agreed, final transcriptions will be deposited in the Columbia Oral History Archive.

The application for the course is here: <https://bit.ly/2ZmREbD>

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- \* Develop a critical perspective on archives and the role of oral history
- \* Evaluate various claims about care and care work, both paid and unpaid
- \* Analyze labor market inequality and segmentation and in particular how race, gender, class, skill, and immigration status all shape the monetary and social value of paid labor
- \* Conduct, record, transcribe, and annotate an interview
- \* Participate in creating an archive of oral histories on care work

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Participation
- Attend workshops
- Contribute to a collective slide show about the archive
- Conduct a practice peer interview
- Conduct one 60-minute interview and follow-up interviews as necessary
- Transcribe and annotate the interview
- Write a 10-page essay about how your interview contributes to scholarly analyses of care work
- Presentation: multiple options: poster, recorded slide presentation, zine, student facilitation, facilitate discussion for guest speaker

### **Grading:**

Participation:	20%
Practice Interview and Transcription	10%
Care Worker Interview	20%
Transcription	20%
8-10 Minute Presentation	10%
Final Essay	20%

## **REQUIRED READING**

- Arlie Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling* (1979) (Chapter 1)
- Dorothy Roberts, "Spiritual and Menial Housework" *Yale Law Journal* (1997)

- Premilla Nadasen “Rethinking Care Work: (Dis)Affection and the Politics of Caring” *Feminist Formations* (2021)
- Frontline nurses event/ CSSD
- Public Theater’s, *The Line*
- Care Documentary (streaming via CLIO)
- NDWA website
- Mignon Duffy “Reproducing Labor Inequalities: Challenges for Feminists Conceptualizing Care at the Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class” *Gender and Society* (2005)
- Alice Childress, *Like One of the Family: Conversations From a Domestic’s Life* (Beacon Press 2017) (excerpt)
- Nancy Folbre and Julie Nelson “For Love or Money – or Both?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2000)
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2002. "Love and Gold" In *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, edited by, Arlie Russell Hochschild, Barbara Ehrenreich. New York: Metropolitan Press: 15-30
- Costa, Maria Dalla and Selma James. *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, (Falling Wall Press, 1975),
- Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts”, *Small Axe* 12 (2): 1-14
- Maria Cotera, “Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster”: Feminist Archival Praxis After the Digital Turn” *South Atlantic Quarterly* (2015) 114 (4): 781-801
- Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance” *Archival Science*, (2002)
- Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack, “Learning to Listen”
- Daniel Kerr, “Allen Nevins is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical Oral History Practice in the United States”

### **SUPPLEMENTARY READING**

- Barbara Laslett and Johanna Brenner, “Gender and Social Reproduction: Historical Perspectives” *American Review of Sociology* (1989)
- Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Women’s Work” *Signs*, 1992
- Romero, Mary and Nancy Pérez “Conceptualizing the Foundation of Inequalities in Care Work” in *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol 60 (2) (2016): 172-188.
- Berg, Heather. “An Honest Day’s Wage for a Dishonest Day’s Work: (Re)Productivism and Refusal” in *Women’s Studies Quarterly* (42: 1 and 2: Spring/Summer 2014): 161-176
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. *Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America* (Harvard University Press, 2010).
- Eileen Boris and Jennifer Klein, *Caring for America: Home Health Workers in the Shadow of the Welfare State* (2012).

- Mignon Duffy, *Making Care Count: A Century of Gender, Race, and Paid Care Work* (2011)
- Premilla Nadasen, *Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African American Women Who Built a Movement* (2005)

### **REQUIRED WORKSHOPS**

- Archives and Oral History
- IMATS
- The Mechanics of Conducting an Oral History
- Transcribing Oral Histories

### **GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **The Living Syllabus**

This course is designed to be collaborative. I hope to draw on student expertise and empower students to help direct this course. Because so much of what we are doing in this class is experimental, I encourage your input and suggestions. Consequently, we will be working with a “living” syllabus. That is, we can collectively revise, shift direction slightly, add resources and topics or comment on upcoming classes based on ideas, interests and inspirations as they surface. I urge you to think about where you are now and what resources and information you have to share. I want to know if something – whether related to technology, structure, content – can be adapted to be the best fit for you. Each student will have an opportunity to facilitate a conversation in the class, to share your knowledge, help guide the content of the course and demystify the notion of expertise. We will collectively develop a set of community norms/agreements that will guide us over the course of the semester – best practices, so to speak.

#### **Guidelines for Hyflex Learning:**

Although the intention is for this course to meet in person, there will be students enrolled in the course who cannot or do not want to physically attend. There is also no guarantee that those who want to will be able to meet in person throughout the semester. So, we all need to be prepared to shift to on-line learning.

This is a hyflex course, which means that you have the flexibility to work remotely or meet in person. In addition to remote and in-person, there are also multiple options for asynchronous learning – although there are times when we will want/need to meet synchronously. I have tried to create options for people who find synchronous meetings challenging. Most of the work for this class can be done asynchronously if that is what works best for you. Even so, the intention is not for you to work alone, but to find alternative ways to engage with me and your peers.

I will be relying on some new digital tools. In addition to Zoom and Canvas, we will use Padlet to have discussions and Perusall to annotate and comment on readings and

videos. You may also use Flipgrid to make and upload videos. These technologies allow us to work either synchronously or asynchronously. Please feel free to suggest other on-line or digital platforms or APPs that you think would be beneficial to the class. Our on-line seminar meetings will be a mix of independent work, small and large group discussion, and brainstorming or collective work. We will have breaks and use mixed media.

### **Some Thoughts about Immersive Learning**

Why an immersive course? Immersive courses offer students flexibility – to be on campus part of the semester or to take courses in either block A or B. So, half your semester may be in person and the other half remote. Because this is an immersive course, it will move rather quickly. We will meet twice a week and your workload will be the typical amount for a semester-long course but in half the time. In that regard, the course will be demanding.

### **Building Community**

One of the challenges of hybrid or online learning is building community, which is especially important in a seminar like this. Building community means both me getting to know each of you and you getting to know one another. I will schedule one-on-one meetings with each of you so I have a chance to hear your thoughts and answer your questions. I will build in informal time during class for all of you to chat. We will try to create an affirming, active-listening space, where listening to and hearing others is considered a form of participation. To that end we will strive to not raise our hand until the other person has finished speaking and will create space to think between comments.

Another way to build community is team work. The class will be divided into 3 teams. Teams will work collaboratively on different class projects. Each team may read a different text and engage in small group discussions. Teams will sometimes be “experts” in particular issues and come back to the larger group to teach and share. Your teammates are also your go-to folks for questions or brainstorming.

Since many people will be learning remotely, we should not be afraid to bring our whole selves to the class when we feel comfortable doing so. That might mean wearing pajamas to class or having your pet join you – even as we try to be respectful and give the necessary attention to meetings. No one wants to be a part of a conversation where they feel they aren’t being listened to. There may be some students who don’t want to bring too much of themselves in – and that is perfectly fine. I would like everyone to turn on their video and you may select a background if you would like. Although it is hard to get to know one another remotely, we will do our best to move beyond the boundaries of the Zoom box – or as I learned in an improv class this past summer, work to let the frame fall away.

### **Thinking outside the box**

This course is designed to embrace this moment as a learning opportunity; to understand and analyze work, especially care work. By interviewing essential workers, we will have a chance to view the pandemic through a different lens. So, rather than try to resume or create a façade of normalcy in an abnormal moment, we seek to understand it. Moreover, our learning strategies/assignments/forms of communication will be altered to align with and make the most of the current crisis. I hope we can consider how different locations and virtual communication might enhance learning opportunities.

We are living in unpredictable times. Although I have never done improv in my life and don't feel altogether comfortable with it, I am thinking about how living in this moment requires us to improvise. Improvisation is about not feeling stuck, about finding a way out. It urges us to have a growth mindset. I ask you to be forgiving to me, your peers and yourself. We will undoubtedly encounter obstacles along the way. I hope that in this class you will find your boundaries stretched. This will better prepare you for the life challenges that lie ahead. You will be learning in new ways. We didn't choose to be in a pandemic-defined world, but my approach is to consider how the pandemic has disrupted normative behaviors and assumptions and created space for new and innovative ways of teaching and interacting – similar to how Arundhati Roy has written about the pandemic as a portal for reimagining the world we live in.

### **Resources:**

There are several Barnard offices you can reach out to for additional assistance:

BCIT

CARDS

Writing Center

IMATS

### **THEMATIC MODULES**

I have organized the course into 3 modules: archives, oral history and care work. Each module has a learning goal with assignments intended to build sequentially towards the learning goal. The modules are interspersed through the course. So, rather than completing one module before moving onto the next, we go back and forth among the three modules.

### **MODULE 1: ARCHIVES**

#### **Goal: Develop a critical perspective on archives and the role of oral history**

- What is an artifact? (SYN or ASY)
  - Brainstorm (SYN)

- Everyone should share an artifact with the class and discuss what makes it important (ASY)
- Readings and discussion on the archive as a site of power (ASY or SYN)
  - Saidiya Hartman
  - Ann Stoler
  - Maria Cotera
- Oral history and archive (workshop with Kimberly Springer) (SYN)
- Class will collectively develop outline re: archives and oral history, using key words, images, and assigned texts (SYN)
- Each group should contribute three slides to a collective slide show about archives and oral history (ASY)

## **MODULE 2: ORAL HISTORY**

### **Goal: Conduct, record, transcribe and annotate an oral history**

- The Ethics of Consent:
  - Consent and IRB regulations: CITI Human Subjects Protection on-line Training: (ASY)
  - Developing a Consent form
- Conducting Oral Histories
  - Using technology to conduct oral history (IMATS)
  - How to conduct an oral history: workshop (SYN) (with Amy Starechski)
  - Conduct 30-minute practice oral history with a peer (ASY)
  - Interview proposal - 1 page: brief biographical sketch of who you are interviewing and a preliminary list of questions
  - Conduct and record oral history with care worker (ASY)
- Transcribing and Annotating
  - Transcribing oral history workshop (SYN) (with Amy Starechski)
  - Transcribe and Annotate your interview
  - Peer Review of Annotated Transcript
  - Complete Annotation
- 10-minute presentation

## **MODULE 3: CARE WORK**

### **Goal: Use your interview to develop an argument about paid care work that contributes to the literature**

- What is care work?
  - Discussion: Paid v. unpaid care work
  - Free Write/video essay to share one example of care work in your life/household. What makes it care work? Break up into pairs to discuss (ASY)
  - Key words exercise: develop list of key words and look them up: Padlet

- Essential work v. care work: Share one news article about care work and COVID. What is the difference between the language of care and the essential workers? (ASY)
- Wages for Housework
  - Maria Dalla Costa
- History of Care Work
  - Read Alice Childress excerpt and post on discussion board
  - Scavenger hunt: Representation/popular culture and the history of care work: find photograph, movie clip or short literature excerpt or an ad (ASY)
- Intersectionality and the Labor Market
  - Segmentation, Race and Gender
    - Examine BLS table
  - spiritual v. menial work (SYN)
    - Discuss Dorothy Roberts
    - Make a list of spiritual and menial tasks associated with care work
- Emotional labor
  - Read Arlie Hochschild on emotional labor
  - What kinds of emotional labor do you do?
- Love or Money?
  - View Care Documentary and post on discussion board (ASY)
  - Examine website of NDWA
  - Read Nancy Folbre
  - Debate: love or money? (SYN)
- Discussion: Compare the demands of paid care workers: yesterday and today (SYN)
- Essay/video: Your oral history and rethinking care work (ASY)

## **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

Red: assignments to be turned in

Orange: asynchronous homework

Green: workshop

Purple: readings

### **Oct. 27: Why Care Work?**

- Introduction to the course
- Develop community agreement
- What is care work?
- What is the difference between paid and unpaid care work? Brainstorm examples
- Free write (or use video/audio of yourself) to share one example of care work in your life. What makes it care work?
- Break up into pairs and share and discuss your example



View *The Line*

Find one news article about care work and COVID to share with the class

Read Arlie Hochschild, "Love and Gold"

**Oct. 29: COVID and Narratives of Care**

- What is the difference between the language of care and the essential workers?
- Discuss news articles
- Padlet: develop list of key words and look them up
- Discussion: Identifying interviewees and setting up meetings

Complete CITI Training

Prepare sample consent form

IMATS workshop

Read: Anderson and Jack; Daniel Kerr

**Nov. 3: No Class: election day**

**Nov. 5: The Practice of Oral History: Interview Process**

- Workshop with Amy Starechski
- Discuss IRB and Ethics of Consent
- Collectively review consent forms

Conduct Oral History with a classmate

Submit proposal for care worker interview: Who are you interviewing? Why this person? What are some of the questions you might ask them?

**Nov. 10: Transcribing and Annotating**

- Workshop with Amy Starechski

**Nov. 12: The Archive as a Site of Power**

- Workshop with Kimberly Springer
- Everyone should bring one artifact to share (ASY OR SYN)
- What makes it an artifact? Why is it important? (Padlet brainstorm)
- Discuss readings
- Submit Practice Interview and 10-minute transcription

Read Saidiya Hartman, Ann Stoler, Maria Cotera

**Nov. 17: Why Oral History? How does oral history disrupt/expand the archive**

- Discuss readings

- Contribute one slide to class digital presentation on Archives and Oral History in Google slides

Collective/Group Work: Outline/Slide presentation using key words, images, and assigned texts, on archives and oral history. Each group should contribute 3 slides

Read: Alice Childress excerpt

Read: Maria Dalla Costa and Selma James

### Nov. 19: History of Care Work

- Post on discussion board, re: Alice Childress
- Discuss Maria Dalla Costa and Selma James,
- Compare wages for housework and domestic worker rights movements
- **Submit: Completed Care Worker interview**

Scavenger hunt: Representation/popular culture and the history of care work: find photograph, movie clip or short literature excerpt or an ad

Read Dorothy Roberts, *Spiritual and Menial Labor*

### Nov. 24: Labor Market and Race/Gender inequality

- Intersectionality and labor market segmentation: Examine BLS table
- Discuss Dorothy Roberts (SYN or ASY)
- Make a list of spiritual and menial tasks (ASY)

### Nov. 26: no class: holiday

Watch Care Work Documentary and post on discussion board

Read Arlie Hochschild excerpts from *The Managed Heart*

Read Nancy Folbre: "Love or Money"

### Dec. 1: Care Work Today

- Discuss Care Work Documentary
- View NDWA website
- Small group prep for debate: love or money?

### Dec. 3: Care Work Debate

- Padlet exercise: What counts as emotional labor? Why is it labor? What kinds of emotional labor do you do?
- In class debate: love or money?
- **Submit transcription**

Peer review of annotated transcript (complete in 48 hours)

Read Nadasen, "Rethinking Care Work"

**Dec. 8: Rethinking Care Work: Wrap up and Reflection**

- Discuss Nadasen
- Compare demands of paid care workers past and present
- Re-visit Arlie Hochschild's "Love and Gold"
- Discuss Essays

**Dec. 10: Presentations on the process of oral history**

- Submit Final Annotated Transcript

**Dec. 15: Final Written or Video Essay Due**