

SYLLABUS

1. Information regarding the programme

1.1 Higher education institution	Babeş-Bolyai University
1.2 Faculty	Faculty of Sociology and Social Work
1.3 Department	Sociology
1.4 Field of study	Sociology
1.5 Degree	Master's degree
1.6 Study programme/ Qualification	Labour and Social Transformations/Muncă și transformări sociale

2. Information regarding the course

2.1 Course title	Labor under platform capitalism/Munca in capitalismul de platforma						
2.2 Lectures held by	Oana Mateescu						
2.3 Seminars held by	Oana Mateescu						
2.4. Year of study	2	2.5 Semester	1	2.6. Type of evaluation	E	2.7 Course type	Compulsory

3. Total estimated time (hours/semester of didactic activities)

3.1 Hours per week	3	Of which: 3.2 lectures	2	3.3 seminar/laboratory	1
3.4 Total hours in the curriculum	42	Of which: 3.5 lectures	28	3.6 seminar/laboratory	14
Distribution of time:					hours
Learning using manual, course support, bibliography, course notes					40
Additional documentation (in libraries, on electronic platforms, field documentation)					40
Preparation for seminars/labs, homework, papers, portfolios and essays					50
Tutorials					0
Evaluations					3
Other activities:					---
3.7 Total hours of individual study	133				
3.8 Total hours per semester (number of credits x 25 hours)	175				
3.9 Number of ECTS credits	7				

4. Prerequisites (if necessary)

4.1. curriculum	---
4.2. competencies	---

5. Conditions (if necessary)

5.1. for the lectures	---
5.2. for the seminar/ lab activities	---

6. Specific competencies acquired:

Professional competencies	<p><i>C1. Interact professionally in research and professional environments</i></p> <p><i>C2. Gather data</i></p> <p><i>C3. Apply knowledge of human behaviour</i></p> <p><i>C4. Apply scientific methods</i></p> <p><i>C5. Apply research ethics and scientific integrity principles in research activities</i></p> <p><i>C6. Apply statistical analysis techniques</i></p> <p><i>C8. Communicate with a non-scientific audience</i></p> <p><i>C9. Conduct research across disciplines</i></p> <p><i>C12. Develop professional network with researchers and scientists</i></p> <p><i>C13. Operate open source software</i></p> <p><i>C14. Disseminate results to the scientific community</i></p> <p><i>C15. Demonstrate disciplinary expertise</i></p> <p><i>C16. Perform scientific research</i></p> <p><i>C18. Increase the impact of science on policy and society</i></p> <p><i>C19. Manage findable accessible interoperable and reusable data</i></p> <p><i>C20. Manage research data</i></p> <p><i>C24. Think abstractly</i></p> <p><i>C25. Integrate gender dimension in research</i></p> <p><i>C26. Interpret current data</i></p> <p><i>C29. Promote the participation of citizens in scientific and research activities</i></p> <p><i>C30. Promote open innovation in research</i></p> <p><i>C31. Promote the transfer of knowledge</i></p> <p><i>C32. Publish academic research</i></p> <p><i>C33. Draft scientific or academic papers and technical documentation</i></p> <p><i>C34. Write scientific publications</i></p> <p><i>C35. Synthesise information</i></p> <p><i>C37. Study human societies</i></p> <p><i>C40. Write research proposals</i></p>
Transversal competencies	<p><i>CT1. Demonstrates initiative</i></p> <p><i>CT2. Taking a proactive approach</i></p> <p><i>CT3. Shows respect for the diversity of cultural values and norms</i></p> <p><i>CT4. Applying civic skills and competencies</i></p> <p><i>CT5. Critical thinking</i></p> <p><i>CT6. Working with digital devices and applications</i></p> <p><i>CT7. Applying knowledge in the field of social sciences and humanites</i></p>

7. Course Objectives (outcome of the acquired competencies)

7.1 General objective of the course	<p>The rise of digital platforms has been heralded as both a new stage of digital capitalism and a form of hybrid techno-feudalism. Global platforms now structure work, leisure, communication, cultural production, and political participation—transforming economies and societies while attracting intense criticism and regulatory scrutiny. Some view them as enablers of work flexibility, while others warn of their monopolistic control, exploitative practices, and escalation of precarious work.</p> <p>This course examines the political and economic shifts shaping contemporary</p>
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	<p>capitalism in an era of rapid technological change. Students will explore the multiple forms of platform work within an uneven global labor market, where platforms often serve as infrastructures of migration. They will analyze the implications of artificial intelligence and algorithmic management for the (re)division of labor, worker autonomy, and power dynamics—while considering how legal and political mechanisms might counteract these effects.</p> <p>Finally, the course will investigate the challenges of labor solidarity and resistance in platform economies, as well as possible futures of work in an age of AI and automation. Through critical engagement with key debates, students will gain a deeper understanding of labor’s evolving role in digital capitalism and the forces shaping its transformation.</p>
7.2 Specific objective of the course	<p>To enable students to define and analyse platforms and platform capitalism; To provide a nuanced understanding of different types of platform labor from a comparative and critical perspective; To enable students to analyse the interplay between technological and social change; To provide students conceptual and methodological tools for engaging in public debate and policy advocacy.</p>

8. Content

8.1 Lectures	Teaching methods	Obs.
1. Introduction of the course (topics, requirements, evaluation)	Presentation, Q&A	
2. Infrastructures: from system to network to platform	Presentation, Q&A	
3. The planetary labor market	Presentation, Q&A	
4. Platforms and platform capitalism	Presentation, Q&A	
5. Precarity in digital and gig work	Presentation, Q&A	
6. The fragmentation of labor: tasks and microwork	Presentation, Q&A	
7. Algorithmic management	Presentation, Q&A	
8. Worker monitoring and labor surveillance	Presentation, Q&A	
9. AI and invisible labor	Presentation, Q&A	
10. AI and platform opacity	Presentation, Q&A	
11. Platform regulation: labor and monopoly	Presentation, Q&A	
12. Labor conflicts and resistance	Presentation, Q&A	
13. The future of work	Presentation, Q&A	
14. Students’ presentations of final essay drafts	Students’ presentations	
8.2 Seminars		
The seminars will closely follow the topics of lectures and discuss the readings recommended for each topic.	Discussions and debates based on the readings.	
8.2 Bibliography Aloisi, Antonio & Valerio de Stefano. 2022. <i>Your boss is an algorithm: Artificial intelligence, platform work and labour</i> . Bloomsbury. Allmer, Thomas et all (eds). 2024. Critical perspectives on digital capitalism. <i>tripleC</i> 22 (1): 140-433. Altenried, M. 2022. <i>The Digital Factory: The Human Labor of Automation</i> . Chicago: Chicago University Press.		

Benanav, Aaron. 2020. The Automation Discourse. In *Automation and the Future of Work*. New York: Verso.

Crawford, Kate. 2021. *Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence*. Yale University Press.

Durand, Cedric. 2024. *How Silicon Valley unleashed techno-feudalism*. NY: Verso.

Dyer-Witherford, Nick; Atle Mikkola Kjosen; James Steinhoff. 2019. Introduction + Conclusion. *Inhuman Power: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Gray, M. and Suri, S. 2019. *Ghost labor: how to stop Silicon Valley from building a new global underclass*. Boston: Harcourt.

Jones, P. 2021. *Work without the worker* (ch. 1 & Postscript). Verso.

Mezzadra, Sandro et al (eds). 2024. *Capitalism in the platform age*. Springer.

Niebler, V. 2023. Transcending borders? Horizons and challenges of global tech worker solidarity. *Journal of political sociology* 1(2).

Ravenelle, Alexandra J. 2019. *Hustle and Gig: Struggling and Surviving in the Sharing Economy* [ch 4 & 7]. University of California Press.

Rikap, Cecilia. 2025. *The rulers: corporate power in the age of AI and the cloud*. NY: Verso.

Schor, Juliet. 2020. Earning on the platforms [ch. 2]. In *After the gig: how the sharing economy got hijacked and how to win it back*. University of California Press.

Srnicek, Nick. 2017. Platform Capitalism [ch 2]. London: Polity Press.

Stark, David and Ivana Pais. 2020. Algorithmic Management in the Platform Economy. *Sociologica* 14 (3).

Thorhaug, Anne et al (eds.). 2024. *The economic lives of platforms: Rethinking the political economy of digital markets*. Bristol University Press.

Vallas, Steven and Juliet Schor. 2020. What do platforms do? Understanding the gig economy. *Annual Review of Sociology* 46 (16):1–22.

Vandaele, K. & Silvia Rainone (eds.). 2025. *The Elgar companion to regulating platform work*. Elgar Publishing.

Bibliografie optionala

Atanasoski, Neda and Kalindi Vora. 2019. Automation and the Invisible Service Function: Toward an “Artificial Artificial Intelligence,” pp. 87-107. In *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots and the Politics of Technological Futures*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Benjamin, Ruha. 2019. *Race after technology*. Polity Press.

Bilic, P., Primorac, J. and Valtysson, B. 2018. Technology, labor and politics in the 21st century. In *Technologies of labor and the politics of contradiction*. London: Palgrave, pp. 1-16.

Callum, Cant. 2020. The warehouse without walls: A workers’ inquiry at Deliveroo. *Ephemera* 20(4): 131-161.

Chan, Jenny et al. 2020. *Dying for an iPhone: Apple, Foxconn and the lives of China’s workers* [ch 1 & 8]. Haymarket Books.

Chesta, Riccardo et al. 2019. Food delivery workers’ struggles in Italy. *PACO* 12(3): 819-844.

Holland, John. 2020. Amazon Inquiry. <https://notesfrombelow.org/article/amazon-inquiry>

Huws, U. 2014. *Labor in the global digital economy: The Cybertariat comes of age*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Kasmir Sharryn si Lesley Gill (eds). 2022. *The Routledge Handbook of the Anthropology of Labor*. London: Routledge.

Mackenzie, Adrian. 2025. *1000 Platforms: Ensembles as Ontological Experiments*. Bristol University Press.

McQuillan, D. 2022. *Resisting AI*. Policy Press.

Pasquinelli, Matteo. 2023. *The eye of the master: a social history of artificial intelligence*. NY: Verso.

Seaver, Nick. 2022. *Computing Taste: Algorithms and the Makers of Music Recommendation*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Shestakofsky, B. 2017. Working Algorithms: Software Automation and the Future of Work. *Work and Occupations*, 44(4), 376–423.

Yates, Luke. 2024. *Platform politics*. Bristol University Press.

Zuboff, S. 2018. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. Profile Books.

9. Corroborating the content of the discipline with the expectations of the epistemic community, professional associations and representative employers within the field of the program

The course is relevant to understanding a changing labor market, profoundly marked by digital technologies. It will offer students a good grasp on the political, economic, cultural and organizational challenges of “platform capitalism.”

10. Evaluation

Activity:	10.1 Evaluation criteria	10.2 Evaluation methods	10.3 Percentage of the final grade
10.4 Lectures	Solid knowledge of the main concepts and processes discussed in course; the ability to compare and criticize.	Written essay (based on pre-defined comparative structure)	70%
10.5 Seminars	Active participation in seminar discussions based on the readings from the course bibliography	Ongoing evaluation of active participation based on the readings from the course bibliography	30%

10.6 Minimum requirements:
 To get at least 5 points from a maxim of 10 points corresponding to the maximum score/ grade.
 Plagiarism will be promptly sanctioned according to university regulations.

Date: 20.03.2025

Signature of course lecturer /seminar tutor:

Date of approval:

Signature of the head of department