

The Law & Political Economy of Social Reproduction

May 21, 2025, Tea Room, Social Science Research Building

University of Chicago, Hyde Park, Chicago

Open to the Public, [Registration Required](#)

9:00-9:30 - Welcome & Introduction *Breakfast catered by Cafe Tola*

9:30-11:00 - Panel I. Devalued Kinship: Legal Constructions of Family, Race, and Care Obligations

Chair: Martha McCluskey

This panel investigates how legal frameworks define, regulate, and often devalue certain family structures and care relationships. Papers examine the marginalization of extended kinship networks, racialized dimensions of family formation through reproductive technologies, enforcement mechanisms in child support, and constitutional approaches to caregiving. The presentations highlight how the law's articulation of family and care obligations reinforces hierarchies of race, class, and gender while shaping the distribution of reproductive labor across society.

- “Devaluing Kin” **Cynthia Godsoe** (Brooklyn Law School)
- “The New Work Requirements: From Welfare to Child Support and Beyond” **Noah Zatz** (UCLA School of Law)
- “Assisting/Resisting the Reproduction of Race” **Elizabeth Chen** (Brooklyn Law School)

11:00-11:15 - Coffee Break *Assorted Pastries and Coffee catered by Build Coffee*

11:15-12:45 - Panel II. Production and Social Reproduction: Unpacking a Gendered Political Economy

Chair: Maj Grasten, Copenhagen Business School

This panel explores the gendered structures, assumptions and dynamics of the political economy. The papers delve into the intricacies of labor, care, and the ways in which the law defines their contours. By situating the distinct but related dynamics of women's productive labor, and the structures that sustain a gendered and racialized system of social reproduction, this panel engages with the systemic consequences of the imbrications of production and reproduction in sustaining and reinforcing a differentiated and gendered political economy.

- “Trump's Care Agenda: the re-regulation of racialized and gendered labor” **Katherine Moos** (University of Massachusetts, Department of Economics)
- “Law and the distributive interconnectedness of finance, production, and social reproduction” **Serena Natile** (Warwick Law School, University of Warwick)
- “The Physical and Economic Rip-off of the Woman Worker” **Maniza Ahmed** (U. Chicago)

12:45-13:45 – Lunch *Sandwiches catered by Medici*

13:45-15:15 - Panel III. Marketization and Extraction: The Political Economy of Care

Chair: Diana Reddy, UC Berkeley School of Law

This panel examines how care work becomes commodified, financialized, and exploited within contemporary capitalism. Papers explore the rise of private equity in welfare markets, the extraction of value from elder care, the marginalization of migrant care workers, and public policy approaches to care labor. These presentations analyze how market logics reshape care work and how legal structures facilitate or might resist the subordination of care to profit motives, with particular attention to the intersections of gender, race, and migration status in structuring care economies.

- “Governing Welfare Markets: A Competition Response to Finance's Rise in Welfare Markets” **Leanna Katz** (McGill University Faculty of Law)
- “Silver Rush: Extracting Value Via Elder Care” **Andrew Milne** (Suffolk University Law School)
- “Gendered Racial Capitalism and Migrant Marginalization in the U.S. Care Industry” **Sabrina Balgamwalla** (Wayne State Law School)

- “Public Policies and Care Work in Puerto Rico” **Patricia Otón Olivieri**, Marilucy González Báez, Yanira Reyes Gil and Esther Vicente (Inter American University of Puerto Rico School of Law)

15:15-15:30 - Coffee Break *Catered by Medici*

15:30-17:00 - Panel IV: Global Governance and Emerging Frontiers in Social Reproduction

Chair: Helena Alviar García, Science Po Law School

This final panel broadens the conversation to examine global governance of social reproduction and emerging challenges at the frontier of care work. Presentations critique how international governance forms frame gender equality, explore innovative approaches to addressing child neglect through poverty-awareness frameworks, and investigate how technology mediates loneliness and care relationships. These papers highlight how transnational forces and technological changes shape the future of social reproduction across diverse contexts.

- “Reconstructing Child Neglect Through Poverty Awareness Paradigm: Lessons from Israeli Juvenile Courtrooms” **Yael Rimer Cohen** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- “Artificial Companionship and the Law of Loneliness” **E.T. Stone** (Harvard University, Program in American Studies)
- “Gender Mainstreaming in International Economic Law” **Chantal Thomas** (Cornell University)

17:00-18:00 - Wrap-up Discussion & Closing Remarks

Moderated by: Natalia Niedmann Álvarez and Juan Wilson (Ph.D. in History Candidates, U. Chicago)

This concluding session will synthesize key themes from the day's presentations and facilitate dialogue among participants about future directions for research and activism at the intersection of law, political economy, and social reproduction. Participants will reflect on cross-cutting insights, methodological approaches, and potential collaborations that emerged throughout the workshop.

18:30-... Post-Workshop Celebration at Jimmy's (Woodlawn Tap) *Participants are encouraged to gather in an informal end-of-the-day event. Jimmy's is cash only, participants are responsible for their consumption.*