



STUDY GUIDE

CLASS DISMISSED

HOW TV FRAMES THE WORKING CLASS

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NOTE TO TEACHERS

This study guide is designed to help you and your students engage and manage the information presented in this video. Given that it can be difficult to teach visual content—and difficult for students to recall detailed information from videos after viewing them—the intention here is to give you a tool to help your students slow down and deepen their thinking about the specific issues this video addresses. With this in mind, we've structured the guide so that you have the option of focusing in depth on one section of the video at a time. We've also set it up to help you stay close to the video's main line of argument as it unfolds. The structure of the guide therefore mirrors the structure of the video, moving through each of the video's sections with a series of key summary points, questions, and assignments specific to that section.

Pre-viewing Discussion Starters are designed to inspire preliminary discussion about the issues the video addresses prior to viewing.

Key Points provide a concise and comprehensive summary of each section of the video. They are designed to make it easier for you and your students to recall the details of the video during class discussions, and as a reference point for students as they work on assignments.

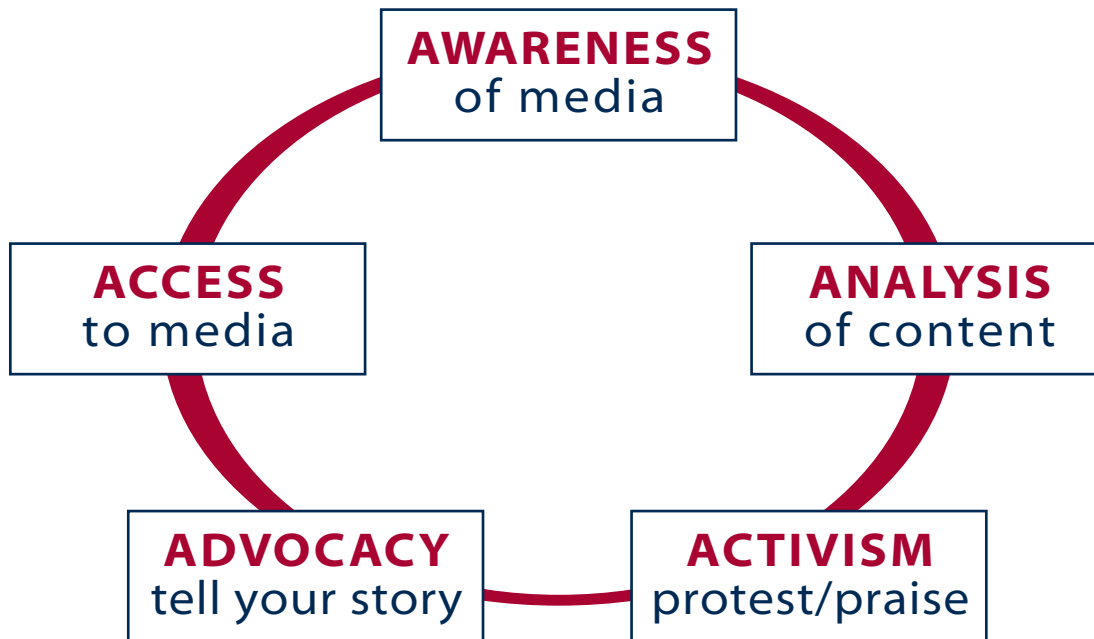
Questions for Discussion & Writing provide a series of questions designed to help you review and clarify material for your students; to encourage students to reflect critically on this material during class discussions; and to prompt and guide their written reactions to the video before and after these discussions. These questions can therefore be used in different ways: as guideposts for class discussion, as a framework for smaller group discussion and presentations, or as self-standing, in-class writing assignments (*i.e. as prompts for "free-writing" or in-class reaction papers in which students are asked to write spontaneously and informally while the video is fresh in their mind*).

Assignments for each section encourage students to engage the video in more depth—by conducting research, working on individual and group projects, putting together presentations, and composing formal essays. These assignments are designed to challenge students to show command of the material presented in the video, to think critically and independently about this material from a number of different perspectives, and to develop and defend their own point of view on the issues at stake.

USING THIS VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM

- » View the video prior to showing it to your students.
- » Review the study guide and choose which exercises you will use with your students.
- » Use the previewing activities to help your students prepare for the ideas presented by the video.
- » Encourage *active listening*. Because the content of this video is likely to elicit emotional responses from the students, it is important that the students engage with each other in ways that ensure everybody has the opportunity both to speak and to be listened to. It is advised that you set guidelines for active listening in advance of classroom discussions. Check out MEF's handout, *Techniques for Active Listening* (<http://www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdf/ActiveListening.pdf>).
- » Have the students keep a journal. It will be an effective place for them to explore their own attitudes and opinions and to record their observations about the media.
- » Review and discuss the handout *How to be a Critical Media Viewer* (<http://www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdf/CriticalViewing.pdf>).
- » Incorporate activism and advocacy into your media literacy study. They are an important part of empowering students.

THE MEDIA LITERACY CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT



THE MEDIA LITERACY CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT EXPLAINED

AWARENESS

Students learn about the pervasiveness of the media in their lives.

ANALYSIS

Students discuss the forms and contents of the media's various messages as well as the intent of most media to persuade an audience.

ACTIVISM

Students develop their own opinions about the negative and positive effects of the media and decide to do something about it – this can be in the form of praise for healthy media, protest of unhealthy media, or development of campaigns to educate others with regard to the media, to change media messages, etc.

ADVOCACY

Students learn how to work with media and use their own media to develop and publicize messages that are healthy, constructive, and all too often ignored by our society.

ACCESS

Students gain access to the media – radio, newspaper, internet, television, etc. – to spread their own message. This in turn leads to further awareness of the media and how it works, which leads to a deeper analysis and so forth.

OVERVIEW

CLASS DISMISSED: HOW TV FRAMES THE WORKING CLASS

Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class examines television's portrayal of working class people, from early images of the late 1940s to those on display in recent situation comedies, dramas, and "reality" programs. The film focuses primarily on two issues—television's under-representation of working-class people and their concerns, and the stereotypes that are used when they are represented at all.

The representation of group identities on television has always been problematic—especially in the case of minorities and the underprivileged, such as people of color, gays and lesbians, women... and the working class. In the United States, commercial television is a huge corporate enterprise, and the backgrounds and interests of those who control the industry have little in common with those of the working class—who happen to be the majority of the American people.

Class Dismissed argues that television misrepresentations and stereotypes help to both create and reinforce negative perceptions of the working class. To provide support for this contention, the video presents historical evidence in the form of clips culled from decades of popular television programming, accompanied by analysis offered by scholars and writers such as Herman Gray, Robin Kelley, Stanley Aronowitz, Barbara Ehrenreich, and others. The film also acknowledges that changing representations of the working class on television may be crucial but it cannot work as an end in itself. In order to make a difference, media criticism and activism must go hand in hand with the fight for economic and social justice in the lives of real working people.

PRE-VIEWING EXERCISES

1. Discuss the ownership of television in the United States as you know it—is it public, private, or both? How is it funded?
2. Do you watch television primarily for entertainment? Why else?
3. How would you define class? Is American society a class-based one?
4. What is your understanding of the population of the United States in terms of race? What percentage of the country is white, and what percentage African American? Who would comprise “people of color”?
5. What percentage of the U.S. population are immigrants? Who comprise the largest group of immigrants in the country today?
6. How do the numbers above (in questions 4 and 5) correspond to their visibility on entertainment television?
7. What is a labor union? Who are its members and what does it do?

SECTION 1: CLASS MATTERS

KEY POINTS

- » Television has been the primary source of middle-class entertainment for decades, but many of its best-known characters have actually been working class.
- » Because we regard television only as entertainment we do not usually give much thought to how it depicts the working class.
- » Class is a taboo subject in the United States. In order to think about television's representation of class, we first need an understanding of class itself.
- » The majority of working class individuals are no longer white male industrial laborers but female, and/or immigrant, service and retail workers.
- » Sixty-two percent of the American labor force is working class. These individuals labor for someone else and have little control over their own work.
- » The working class in the U.S. is a stigmatized class.
- » Many workers internalize this stigma, reject their class status, and do not generally have a sense of class-consciousness.
- » Within the working class itself, the jobs at the bottom of the economic ladder are often held by African Americans and other people of color.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Think about the word "framing" in the subtitle of the film. What are some different meanings of the word "frame"? What does it mean to say that TV frames the working class?
2. Is there an obligation for television to be anything other than entertainment? Why?
3. How is class variously defined in the video?
4. Is class, in your opinion, a taboo subject in the US? If so, what might be the reasons? If you disagree, why do you think this argument is made in the film?
5. What is the "post-industrial" society that Pepi Leistyna refers to?
6. What are the differences between white-, blue-, and pink-collar jobs?
7. What is class-consciousness and how does it exert itself?
8. Why does the Republican Party make the charge of "class warfare" against those who protest their socio-economic policies? What is their definition of class warfare and how is it different from Barbara Ehrenreich's definition?
9. People of color tend to have the worst jobs. What characteristics would define a job that could be classified as one of the "worst"?
3. What sorts of stories that are packaged as news do you think originate from public relations?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. The video discusses how television "frames" the working class. Media theorists talk about "framing" as the way in which the media present cultural "scripts" that guide the public's understanding of issues and events. For an overview of framing theory, take a look at the essay "Media Framing and Effective Public Deliberation" by Adam Simon and Michael Xenos located at <http://jsis.artsci.washington.edu/programs/cwesuw/simon.htm> (pp. 5-7).

SECTION 1: CLASS MATTERS

ASSIGNMENTS *(Continued)*

2. Examine a news segment that discusses an economic or social issue. What are some of the frames that informed the story? Were there some common frames of reference, values or assumptions that shaped the telling of the story? Alternatively, create a script that “frames” an issue of your choosing, for example, an antiwar protest or a union strike. Present your script along with an outline of the different mechanisms you used in framing the story, and why you thought they were effective.

3. The profile of the working class is changing from primarily white male industrial laborers to one that is predominantly immigrant and female. Research this statement to find the reasons for this change. The following resources are some useful places to start: Center for the Study of Working Class Life at SUNY Stonybrook, at <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/CAS/wcm.nsf> and the websites of the unions UNITE HERE and SEIU, <http://www.unitehere.org> and <http://www.seiu.org>.

4. People of color hold most of the jobs at the bottom of the ladder. The term “people of color” includes African Americans and all other people who are not white. CUNY professor Stephen Steinberg recently wrote a provocative article, “Immigrants, African Americans and Race Discourse,” that stirred debate about tensions in the labor market between African Americans and immigrants. He argues that throughout the history of the United States, African Americans have lost out in the job market to immigrants because of racism. Read the article which appeared in *New Politics* Vol. X, No. 3, and the four responses to it that appeared in the following issue. Offer your own response to it. The article is also online at <http://www.wpunj.edu/~newpol/issue39/Steinberg39.htm>.

SECTION 2: THE AMERICAN DREAM MACHINE

KEY POINTS

- » In the early days of television the working class was more visible on tv than in other sorts of public discourse.
- » As television became increasingly commercial, the role of advertisers extended from sponsorship to areas of content creation such as scriptwriting and the hiring of talent.
- » Advertising has redefined the meaning of the American dream.
- » On television, and increasingly in real life, owning certain products indicates that one belongs to a particular position in the socio-economic hierarchy—for instance, “high enough” in society to live the idealized suburban life.
- » Television showed people how to become less ethnic and more American. But American was defined as white and middle class.
- » Due to commercial pressures, working-class and immigrant families have gradually been disappearing from the TV screen.
- » The early days of television coincided with the growth of suburbia. In both the culture of suburbia and the content of television acquiring consumer products is equated with success and happiness.
- » In America individual choice has been framed as the most basic of all freedoms.
- » Government programs, union organizing, and collective bargaining were central to improved standards of living in the post-War period. These improved standards led many to the impression that the working-class was vanishing, as they moved up in American society.
- » During the Cold War period, unions, who worked for the rights of working people and a better standard of life, were seen as a threat by elite members of American society.
- » It is hard for those who see themselves as middle-class to acknowledge their working-class identities, since being working class is seen as a failure.
- » Of course television alone cannot be blamed for the “disappearance” of the working class. It is the result of the larger cultural discourse in which class has been “dismissed,” or, as Herman Gray says in the film, “class itself has taken a fairly strong beating.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Working in groups or individually, draw up a list of a dozen popular television shows. How would you characterize the main characters by class?
2. What does it mean to say that advertisers redefined the meaning of the American dream?
3. What is product placement? Think of some examples in movies or television shows. Why do you think this happens and what are its implications for makers and viewers of programs?
4. Pepi Leistyna talks about the erasure of ethnicity, and the increasing homogenization of American society. What are some reasons for this, from the point of view of both ethnic communities as well as mainstream television viewers?
5. Why are parallels drawn between the growth of television and suburbia?
6. What limits, if any, do you see to the idea of freedom of choice in a consumer society?
7. During the McCarthy era, labor unions were associated with communism. Why was this association made?
8. Americans profess a belief in the value of work, and in working one’s way up in society. However, being working class is often seen as a failure. Is there a contradiction here? Discuss.

SECTION 2: THE AMERICAN DREAM MACHINE

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Debate the notion of a consumer society. Are all societies in principle consumer societies? Two good references would be the books *Consumer Society* edited by Neva Goodwin, Frank Ackerman, and David Kiron (Island Press, 1997), and *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, by Jean Baudrillard (Sage Publications, 1998 [1970]). Pay particular attention to the role of the media in the development of a consumer society.
2. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), throughout the 1990s the average real income of the highest earning families grew by 15 percent, while it remained level for families at the bottom of the income ladder. Write a short essay outlining the reasons for this disparity. Some resources are the CBPP's research, the Economic Policy Institute, and the U.S. Census at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p60-221.pdf>. For information on the racial aspects of this, go to the website of the Racial Wealth Divide Project at <http://www.racialwealthdivide.org>, in particular, the article "Doubly Divided" by Meizhu Lui.

SECTION 3: FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MIDDLE

KEY POINTS

- » In the 1950s television portrayals of African Americans represented them primarily as servants and sources of entertainment.
- » In order to gain even limited access, during the first decades of television African Americans and other minorities were forced to play by the television industry's restrictive rules.
- » In the post-Civil Rights period, African Americans began appearing more frequently on prime time TV, suggesting that there is room for everyone on television. Struggles for social justice were thus reduced to simply a matter of inclusion.
- » In the 1970s ghetto life was depicted in a sanitized manner, with safe, happy images. It was also depicted as a temporary condition from which blacks could easily escape—as Robin Kelley notes when he compares the culmination of the final episode of *Good Times* to the rescue of the shipwrecked crew of *Gilligan's Island*.
- » Most programs depicting African Americans did not deal with economic hardship but instead promoted the idea of the self-made man, as in *The Jeffersons*.
- » The implication of programs such as this was that one could make it on one's own. Thus there was no need for affirmative action, welfare, or other forms of social support.
- » One way for black children on TV to escape the ghetto was to be raised by white people, as in programs like *Webster* and *Different Strokes*. The assumption was that whites could succeed where black parents had failed.
- » One of the main attractions of the *Cosby Show* for African American audiences was that the characters were not depicted as buffoons, but as intelligent, attractive, successful people.
- » In the 90s, TV shifted to a portrayal of successful black people as role models for working-class blacks, as in the *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*.
- » Asian Americans and Latinos have largely been excluded from prime time TV, or relegated to bit parts.
- » Latinos are often depicted as middle-class people striving for the American dream, thus rendering them non-threatening. Problems related to immigration and exploitation are hidden.
- » Since the 1990s, gays and lesbians have been slowly admitted on to the small screen. This is both a response to changing social norms, and an attempt to spice up the appeal of the networks' existing repertoire through potentially controversial portrayals.
- » Gay and lesbians on television, however, usually had to appeal to mainstream notions of the average American family. This means that they had to be attractive, uphold basically traditional family values, and acquire the good life through legitimate means.
- » Working-class gay characters continue to be underrepresented on television.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. To gain access to television, African Americans and other minorities had to play by the television industry's rules. What are some of those rules? What do you think are implicit and/or explicit ways these rules are laid out in different stages of conceiving and producing a show?
2. In the post civil rights era, social struggles on TV are reduced to a matter of inclusion. How did television over-simplify the struggles of African-Americans and other marginalized groups?

SECTION 3: FROM THE MARGINS TO THE MIDDLE

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING (Continued)

3. African Americans on television have been stereotyped both as buffoons and as self-made successes. What other stereotypes of minorities have you seen on television?
4. Both ghetto life and people of color have been depicted on television as “non-threatening.” Whom might they be a threat to, and in what way? What’s the effect of presenting the ghetto as non-threatening?
5. In this segment, Latinos, homosexuals, and African Americans are described as people on the margins. What do they share in common and where do their struggles differ?
6. How does the issue of class complicate the above question?
7. Think about the notion of people being “marginal” or “invisible.” Come up with some categories besides race that would fit this description.
8. In the last decade, African-Americans have become much more visible on entertainment television. Many people, including Herman Gray, have argued that more is not necessarily better when it comes to representations. Why are increased percentages alone not a sufficient marker of progress when it comes to representations of racially and culturally diverse groups?
9. One of the criteria mentioned for the arrival of gays and lesbians onto prime time is “familialism.” What does the phrase “family values” suggest to you and what is the role of this phrase in American public discourse?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. This section discusses two differing notions of American society: as a meritocracy where one can achieve anything by individual effort, or as a society where people must overcome structural inequalities to gain access to social and economic opportunities. Examine this tension using the example of any one social group.
2. While middle and upper class gay people are gaining visibility on TV, working class gays and lesbians are still absent. How does being gay complicate being a working-class person? Consider the film *Boys Don’t Cry*, or the documentary it is based on, *The Brandon Teena Story*, or the essay by Amber Hollibaugh “The Price of Love” in the journal *New Labor Forum*, Fall 2005 (http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/newlaborforum/html/2005/fall/abstracts.html#The_Price_of_Love_), which gives a first person account of what it means to be gay and working-class. Use any of these pieces, or any other example from the media, that examines the experience of being gay and working class. Discuss why creative work like documentary film can bring taboo subjects into public discourse, which may not be possible otherwise. What are some other media spaces where sympathetic representation is possible—for instance, blogs or video diaries?
3. How do you think the particular concerns of gay working-class people can be incorporated into social justice movements, such as the labor movement? One useful book to consult is *Out at Work* edited by Kitty Krupat and Patrick McCreary (University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

SECTION 4: WOMEN HAVE CLASS

KEY POINTS

- » When it comes to paid employment outside of the home, women have always earned less than men. Most women also routinely work a double shift—one outside of the home and one in the home.
- » The majority of occupations held by women are lower middle class and working class jobs.
- » Women of color, especially, tend to hold the lowest paying jobs.
- » Television portrayals rarely call attention to the inequality of pay for women or the fact that they usually hold service or retail jobs.
- » In the 1950s and 60s, there were more women than ever before in the American workforce, but this fact was not reflected on TV.
- » Likewise, in the 1970s, the number of single-parent households exploded, 90 percent headed by women. But only one television program, *One Day at a Time*, reflected this reality.
- » The poverty rate of single mothers is much higher than the national average.
- » Most single women do not have the glamorous, high-status jobs that women on television tend to hold.
- » When women on television are shown dealing with problems, the problems are usually framed as purely personal and individual, and not caused by the general injustice of their socio-economic situation.
- » Women in the workplace are not usually empowered to confront their males bosses in the manner that Roseanne does in the clip excerpted in the film.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Why do you think women have always been paid less than men?
2. The poverty rate of single mothers is much higher than the national average. Apart from wage inequality, what other reasons might there be for this?
3. In the sweatshops of the worldwide garment industry, women workers are preferred by their employers because they are seen as more hardworking, obedient, and less likely to protest their working conditions. What notions about women workers do you think exist in the United States? Think of jobs at both the lower and upper ends of the economic ladder.
4. What occupations and positions do women hold on the TV shows that you are familiar with?
5. Studies suggest that women continue to be stereotyped on television shows. For instance, women on television shows are usually more agitated, timid, and afraid than men. They are generally depicted as sexually attractive. In employment roles they are less likely to hold the most important jobs. Do you see such patterns on television? Are there others?
6. Are women able to influence and change their representation on television?
7. Pepi Leistyna says that *Roseanne* appeared in the midst of a backlash against feminism. What is a backlash in this sense? Who would benefit from a backlash against feminism and/or feminists? Is there still a backlash against feminism today? What form does this take?
8. Why did Roseanne Barr, “the person,” take a lot of heat in the press for insisting that her show be both a feminist and a working-class show?
9. Why is Roseanne’s confrontation with her boss a “rare event” on television? What “ideas” might it give people?
10. Do women viewers simply take in television representations without question? Is television viewing passive or active? Who holds control when it comes to television images and what they mean to viewers?

SECTION 4: WOMEN HAVE CLASS

ASSIGNMENTS

1. The history of humankind is the history of male dominance. For a short analysis, choose one or two major public institutions—for instance the Catholic Church, the U.S. government, boards of major universities, or the AFL-CIO. What has been the male-female ratio in their leadership in the last 30 years, or as far back as you choose to go? How do you think this has influenced major decisions and actions they have taken—and issues they have neglected?

2. There are plenty of statistics comparing the earnings of women to men. The U.S. Department of Labor statistics (available online at <http://www.bls.gov/>) show women earning between 60 to 80 percent of male wages over the past two decades. Compare two articles that talk about the wage gap: “The Wage Game” (http://beta.jobsnd.com/docs/lmi/articles/2002_08-The_Wage_Game.pdf) and “The Wage Gap Myth” (<http://ncpa.org/pub/ba/ba392>). One describes the wage gap as a real act of discrimination, the other sees the wage gap as a myth. Paying attention to the language and assumptions of each writer, give specific examples of how they make their case about the different issues.

3. Many critics contend that women are both underrepresented and misrepresented on TV. According to a study conducted by the National Organization for Women (<http://www.nowfoundation.org/issues/communications/watchout3/>) negative stereotypes and male-dominated perspectives persist on television even into the twenty-first century. Analyze the numbers of male and female lead characters on six or seven TV shows yourself and write up what you find. Also consider whether any other patterns exist in these shows regarding representations of women—for example, recurring personality or physical traits.

4. Marilyn Waring was elected to Parliament in New Zealand in 1975, at the age of 22. She has been an active challenger of traditional economic policies, which emphasize the free market, and neglect the unpaid work of women around the world. A film about her work is called *Who’s Counting: Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics*. View this film or look at a website of the “Who’s Counting?” Project, at <http://www.newmoralvision.org/WCP>. What are the different ways in which the film supports the argument that traditional women’s work has been undervalued? Speculate on how the global market economic system could begin to account for the unpaid work of women in society. Should this be at a national, or even international, legislative level? Or are there smaller, local ways where change can begin?

SECTION 5: CLASS CLOWNS

KEY POINTS

- » Television “makes up” for the lack of attention it pays to the working class by blaming them for being failures.
- » Historically, a small percentage of the working class was able to move beyond its class origins into professional and managerial jobs. These opportunities are now even more rare than they were in the past. The limited upward movement of the past was “explained” by a myth which suggested that social mobility was the result of individual initiative and effort while ignoring the structural factors that limit or constrain opportunity.
- » The common stereotype of the working class is that they have poor taste, are both unintelligent and lazy, and are reactionary in their politics and beliefs.
- » Taste is not something one has or doesn’t have—it is acquired.
- » In more recent years, a slew of reality shows focus on “improving” the working class person through makeovers—both financial and physical.
- » In portrayals of working class gender relationships we see a reversal of common stereotypes: it is the working-class male who is the buffoon, and his wife is smart and capable, and frustrated by his idiocy.
- » The worker on television is usually portrayed as an anti-intellectual who is uninterested in books or education, while in reality it was the working class who led the fight for public education.
- » The image of the lazy worker is a convenient scapegoat for corporations in an age of outsourcing and layoffs.
- » Rather than recognize the problems caused by downsizing, poor wages and benefits, and other corporate practices, workers are depicted on television as irresponsible and incompetent, and thus the source, rather than the victim, of social problems.
- » What critiques there are of the current system, through television characters like Beavis and Butthead, are often counterproductive because they focus on individual anarchic acts rather than effective, organized, social change.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Why have the boundaries of social class become more restrictive today than ever before? What factors constrain social mobility today?
2. What examples can you think of that show the mismatch between working class stereotypes on television and the reality of working class lives in the world?
3. Why do you think we are seeing a proliferation of “reality” shows that focus on makeovers as the way to access the American Dream? How do these shows tap into stereotypes about working-class people and myths of social mobility?
4. What does the term anti-intellectualism mean to you? Television often portrays workers as anti-intellectual. Can one level the same charge against television?
5. What does it mean to say that workers are portrayed as political reactionaries?
6. Do you think public opinion is generally sympathetic to striking workers? Why or why not?
7. Apart from public education, what are some of the social causes that workers and unions fought for?
8. It’s been said that workers “buy into” their poor portrayal on television. Do you agree? If so, why do you think this happens?

SECTION 5: CLASS CLOWNS

ASSIGNMENTS

1. This video argues against the notion that hard work is all one needs to move up in American society. It offers the examples of corporate practices of downsizing and outsourcing as obstacles that confront even the most hardworking individuals. Shareholders and corporate executives increasingly become rich while workers lose their jobs, no matter how loyal they are or how hard they work. Two books on corporate practices such as these have been published by Jefferson Cowie of Cornell University: *Capital Moves: RCA's 70-year Quest for Cheap Labor* (The New Press, 1999), and *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization* (Edited by Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, Cornell University Press, 2003). Read one of these books and write a review of it.

2. Create a theme for a television show that you think would represent a working class experience or issue not seen on television. Draw out in detail two or three characters that are representative of the working class. Choose three channels and time slots that you think your show would most likely be aired on with advertising support.

3. Taste has generally been seen as a very personal faculty, one that is indicative of a person's individual judgment and aesthetic sensibility. Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, was the first scholar to conduct a major study on how taste is an acquired and social faculty. In his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Harvard University Press, 1984), he argues that taste is used as a tool by the upper class to maintain class distinctions and domination. What in your opinion is taste? Is it something that is acquired or largely innate? Can it be used as a cultural weapon? Do makeover shows, specifically the changes they use to "transform" their subjects, reinforce this idea?

(Note: There are several commentaries on and summaries of *Distinction* available, and a very interesting critique in an essay by David Halle called "The Audience for Abstract Art: Class, Culture, and Power," in the book *Cultivating Differences*, edited by Michele Lamont and Marcel Fournier, University of Chicago Press, 1992).

SECTION 6: NO CLASS

KEY POINTS

- » While situation comedies portray the working class as comical, and not to be taken seriously, so-called reality shows, talk shows, and cop shows show minorities and working-class whites as deviant and threatening.
- » These shows reinforce the notion that the absence of a father figure and parental guidance contribute to minority youth becoming dangerous people.
- » Cop shows have an important ideological task—they provide justification for the ever-growing U.S. prison system.
- » Contrary to the popular imagination, the majority of the poor in the United States are white.
- » Images of poor white people are rare on television.
- » Poor and working-class whites are usually depicted as outcasts or misfits, and are used for amusement, with labels like hillbilly or redneck.
- » The Republican Party has co-opted “redneck pride” to brand itself as a friend of the working people, while its agenda has actually been detrimental to working class interests.
- » When middle-class people do anything regarded as deviant, it is framed as a personal, individual, flaw not a class characteristic.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. In the film, Robin Kelley criticizes cop shows for depicting African Americans as violent law-breakers, without providing any context about their circumstances and the manner in which socio-economic forces influence patterns of crime. How would a class analysis change the way you watch cop shows? How would it affect your understanding of crime in working-class communities?
2. What does Herman Gray mean when he says that white poverty is not connected to the notion of class in the same way that black poverty is?
3. The Republican Party has co-opted “redneck pride” to brand itself as a friend of the working people. Think of instances that illustrate this point.
4. What are the class characteristics of participants in talk shows like *The Jerry Springer Show*?
5. Deviance is regarded as behavior that differs from the “norm” but is not necessarily criminal. Discuss examples of what is regarded as deviance. What rules are broken by deviant behavior? How do rules of behavior get made and by whom?
6. Do you agree that on television when upper-class people go to jail we see it as a case of a few “rotten apples,” and not just “the way they are”? Consider, for instance, the recent spate of arrests of corporate executives in financial scandals like the Enron affair.
7. A review of Carson McCullers’ 1963 short story collection “The Ballad of the Sad Café and other Stories” in *The Southern Literary Journal* says that the book examines what it means to be white in the South after the Civil War, but African American characters are relatively absent. Theorists of race argue that “white” cannot exist without “black” and vice versa. What do you think?
8. Two stereotypes of working class white people in the media are “white trash” on the one hand or “good country folk” on the other, according to a website that focuses on this issue (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA97/price/open.htm>). What traits are associated with each stereotype? Give a couple of examples from television and other media—comics, film, books.

SECTION 6: NO CLASS

ASSIGNMENTS

1. The Republican Party has co-opted “redneck pride” to brand itself as a friend of the working people. The largest bloc of voters for the Republican Party in the last presidential election was working-class white Americans. Does the working class vote for the party that works against their economic and social interests? One interesting source of debate on this issue is the Fall 2004 issue of *New Labor Forum* (www.newlaborforum.org). Or, you could read Thomas Frank’s book, *What’s the Matter with Kansas?* (Metropolitan Books, 2004), which explores some of the same issues. How does this debate help you understand the Republican Party’s victory in the presidential election of 2004?

2. Two recent films that have been acclaimed by critics are *Crash*, directed by Paul Haggis, and *Million Dollar Baby*, directed by Clint Eastwood. Class portrayals are very sharply drawn out in both these films. Look at the key characters in each film and write an analysis of each character, the kind of class she or he portrays, and the characteristics they depict. Examine, for instance, the differences between Maggie, the heroine of *Million Dollar Baby*, and her family. How do these portrayals conform or differ from the stereotype?

3. African Americans on television are repeatedly depicted as lawbreakers, with no context provided for their behavior. Think of other examples of recurring portrayals on television. (One example from the news is that of stone-throwing Palestinians.) What context is missing in the examples that you discuss? What do you think are the reasons for the lack of context? What is the impression that these repeated representations create?

SECTION 7: CLASS ACTION

KEY POINTS

- » Current labor conditions are marked by declining standards of living, job insecurity, and an increasing gap between the rich and poor.
- » Television's portrayal of the working class cannot be dismissed as trivial or unimportant, particularly in a time of growing economic disparity, job loss and employment insecurity.
- » In today's concentrated media environment, media literacy and media reform movements have assumed a new sense of urgency.
- » True change can take place only when media activists unite with working class people and other movements for social justice.
- » A broad coalition of interests is required to take on not just economic injustice but social and racial inequality.
- » A class alliance is thus needed to restrain capital, and this stretches beyond working-class interests.
- » One cannot fight media representations without also working to change social reality—it needs to be a simultaneous struggle.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Do you agree that living standards for most Americans are in decline? What factors do you take into account in your answer?
2. Labor unions have lost membership over the years, from a density of over 35 percent of workers in the 1950s, to about 13 percent today. What do you think are the reasons for this decline?
3. What has this decline in union membership meant for workers and their rights?
4. What do you understand by the term "cultural citizenship"?
5. Representation and symbolic action are an important part of social struggle. In 2003, immigrants traveled in buses across the country in what was called the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. It evoked the Freedom Rides of the Civil Rights era, but focused on the rights of immigrants. What do such symbolic actions seek to achieve?
6. Does culture have a role in social struggle? In what ways?
7. Representations of labor union actions and issues are scarce in the news media and practically nonexistent in entertainment shows. Given that the majority of Americans are working class, why do you think this is the case?
8. At least one prominent labor journalist has argued for a separate channel on television exclusively for labor. What do you see as the pros and cons of such a channel?
9. Do you think television is where the biggest fight for a public representation of working class issues should be? If you were an activist, what area would you choose to work in, and why?

SECTION 7: CLASS ACTION

ASSIGNMENTS

1. The video argues that media representations cannot change without social change. Media activism should be connected to a larger movement of working people. Examine this idea in concrete terms by using a specific working-class image from mainstream television entertainment (a portrayal of workers on strike, an immigrant group, service workers, etc). If this kind of representation is to change, what are the forces it has to deal with, within the television industry in particular and society in general? What are the short-term and long-term strategies? For example, an article on www.mediachannel.org argues that civil rights groups have been neglecting the media, and if they want to do something about minority representation in the media, they need to take up the issue of media consolidation. (“Why are Civil Rights Groups Neglecting Media Policy?” by Seeta Pena Gangadharan, mediachannel.org, April 11, 2002; also available at www.alternet.org/story/12841).

2. What is meant by the phrase “democracy in the media”? What factors impede the realization of this? Examine the work of a group involved in the fight for media democracy, and what strategies they have used to tackle any specific threat to the democratic functioning of the mass media. Some useful websites are www.freepress.net, www.mediachannel.org/reform, and www.reclaimthemedial.org. The hiring and eventual firing of Kenneth Tomlinson at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is a fairly well publicized example that you could consider.

RESOURCE LIST

RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CLASS

By Pepi Leistyna

ACTIVIST ORGANIZATIONS & WEB RESOURCES

AFL-CIO www.aflcio.org
African American Working Class History www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/index-g.html
Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment www.asje.org
Antagonism: Anti-Capitalist & Anti-State Struggle for World Community www.geocities.com/antagonism1/index.html
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance www.apalanet.org
Association for Union Democracy www.uniondemocracy.org
Bread and Roses www.bread-and-roses.com
Class Action www.classism.org
CEE Bankwatch Network www.bankwatch.org
Center for Campus Organization <http://organizenow.net/cco/>
Center for Economic Justice www.econjustice.net
Center for Economic and Social Rights www.cesr.org
Center for Media and Democracy: PR Watch www.prwatch.org
Center for Popular Economics www.populareconomics.org
Center for the Study of Working Class Life <http://naples.cc.sunysb.edu/CAS/wcm.nsf>
Center for Third World Organizing www.ctwo.org
Center for Working Class Studies www.as.yosu.edu/~cwcs/
Child Labor Coalition www.natlconsumersleague.org/clc.htm
Citizens for Tax Justice www.ctj.org
Class War: Class Unity, Class Pride www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/9482/
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists www.cbtu.org/
Coalition of Labor Union Women www.cluw.org
Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking <http://www.castla.org/>
Commercialism in Education Research Unit www.schoolcommercialism.org
Corporate Accountability Project www.corporations.org
Corporate Watch: Holding Corporations Accountable www.corporatewatch.org.uk
Democratic Socialists of America www.dsauusa.org
Economic Democracy Information Network www.nathannewman.org/EDIN/
Economic Policy Institute <http://www.epinet.org/>
Food Not Bombs <http://home.earthlink.net/~foodnotbombs/>
Frontline News: The Struggle against Imperialism and Transnational Capital <http://hjem.get2net.dk/graversgaard/>
Global Unions www.global-unions.org
Highlander Research and Education Center www.highlandercenter.org
In Fact: Challenging Corporate Abuse, Building Grassroots Power www.infact.org
Information for Socialists <http://sunsite.unc.edu/spc/>
Institute for Women and Work www.ilr.cornell.edu/womenandwork
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility www.iccr.org
International Labor Rights Fund www.laborrights.org

RESOURCE LIST

Jews for Radical & Economic Justice www.jfrej.org
Jobs with Justice <http://www.jwj.org/>
Kensington Welfare Rights Union <http://www.kwru.org/>
Kids against Pollution, Poverty & Prejudice www.kidsagainstpollution.org
Labor and Workers Links http://members.aol.com/_ht_a/yoda348846/labor.html
Labor Arts www.laborarts.org
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement www.lclaa.org/scontactus.html
Labor Heritage Foundation www.laborheritage.org
Labor Party www.thelaborparty.org/
LaborNet: Global Communication for a Democratic, Independent Labor Movement www.labornet.org
Labor Notes: Putting the Movement Back in the Labor Movement www.labornotes.org
Labor Relations and Research Center www.umass.edu/lrrc/
Labor Research Association www.laborresearch.org
Labour Start: Where Trade Unionists Start Their Day on the Net www.labourstart.org/index.shtml
Maquila Solidarity Network www.maquilasolidarity.org
Marxists Internet Archive www.marxist.org
McSpotlight www.mcspotlight.org
National Alliance to End Homelessness www.endhomelessness.org
National Labor Committee: For Workers & Human Rights www.nlcnet.org
National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice www.igc.org/nicwj
Ontario Coalition against Poverty www.ocap.ca/
Open Secrets.Org: Your Guide to the Money in American Elections www.opensecrets.org
Oxfam International www.oxfam.org
Poverty and Race Research Action Council www.prrac.org
Pride at Work www.igc.org/prideatwork/
Public Citizen Global Trade Watch www.citizen.org/trade/
Raise the Floor www.ms.foundation.org/wmspage.cfm?parm1=175
Religion and Socialism Commission <http://dsausa.org/rs/>
Scholars, Artists, and Writers for Social Justice <http://people.umass.edu/sawsj/>
SEIU: Service Employees International Union www.seiu.org/building/janitors/
Sweatshop Watch www.sweatshopwatch.org
Tim's Brain www.timsbrain.com/Memes/Corporate_Power/
UC Berkeley Labor Center <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/blackworkers/resources.shtml>
Unions against Corporate Tyranny www.asia-pacific-action.org/uact/
Union for Radical Political Economics www.urpe.org
Union Resource Network www.unions.org/home/
Union Ring www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/5202/unionring.html
United for a Fair Economy www.ufenet.org
Unite Here! www.uniteunion.org
U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://www.bls.gov/>
Wal-Mart Watch www.walmartwatch.com/neighbor/
Working Class Movement Library www.wcml.org.uk
World Socialist Web Site www.wsws.org
WTOACTION.org <http://wtoaction.org>
Young Democratic Socialists www.ydsusa.org

RESOURCE LIST

JOURNALS & MAGAZINES

Action for Solidarity (UK)
Against the Current (U.S.)
Alternatives Economique (France)
Anarcho-Syndicalist Review (U.S.)
Asian Labour Update (Hong Kong)
Aufheben: Revolutionary Perspectives (UK)
Australian Bulletin of Labour (Australia)
Australian Marxist Review (Australia)
Auto Free Times: Revolutionary Ecology and Economics (U.S.)
Business Ethics: Corporate Social Responsibility Report (U.S.)
Cahiers Marxiste (Belgium)
California Prisoner (U.S.)
Canadian Dimension (Canada)
Capital and Class (UK)
Capitalism, Nature, Socialism: A Journal of Socialist Ecology (U.S.)
Caribbean Labour Journal (Jamaica)
Chartist: For Democratic Socialism (UK)
Collective Action News (U.S.)
Common Sense: Journal of Edinburg Conference of Socialist Economists (UK)
Consumption, Markets, and Culture (U.S.)
Co-op: America's Boycott Action News (U.S.)
Counterpunch (U.S.)
Corporate Watch (UK)
Critique: A Journal of Socialist Theory (Scotland)
Cultural Logic: An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory and Practice (U.S.)
Democratic Left (U.S.)
Developments (UK)
Dialogue & Initiative: Journal of Theory and Practice of the Committees of Correspondence (U.S.)
di Base (Italy)
Dollars and Sense: What's Left in Economics (U.S.)
Echanges: Bulletin du Reseau "Echanges et Movement" (France)
Ecologist (UK)
Economic and Industrial Democracy: An International Journal (Sweden)
Economic and Political Weekly (India)
Economy and Society (UK)
European Labor Forum (UK)
Feminist Economics: Journal of the International Association for Feminist Economics (U.S.)
Foreign Control Watchdog (New Zealand)
Grassroots Economic Organizing Newsletter (U.S.)
Historical Materialism: Research in Critical Marxist Theory (UK)

RESOURCE LIST

Historical Studies in Industrial Relations (UK)
History Workshop Journal (UK)
Industrial and Labor Relations Review (U.S.)
Industrial Worker (U.S.)
Iniciativa Socialista (Spain)
International Labor and Working-Class History (U.S.)
International Migration Review (U.S.)
International Socialism: A Quarterly Journal of Socialist Theory (UK)
International Socialist Forum (electronic) (UK)
International Socialist Review (U.S.)
International Viewpoint (UK)
Journal of Material Culture (UK)
Labor, Capital, and Society/Travail, Capital, et Societe: A Journal on the
Third World (Canada)
Labor History (U.S.)
Labor Notes: The State of Native America (U.S.)
Labor Studies Journal (U.S.)
Latin American Perspectives: A Journal on Capitalism and Socialism (U.S.)
Left Business Observer (U.S.)
Links: International Journal of Socialist Renewal (Australia)
Mexican Labor News and Analysis (Mexico)
Monthly Labor Review (U.S.)
Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine (U.S.)
Nature, Society and Thought: A Journal of Dialectical and Historical Materialism (U.S.)
New Labor Forum: A Journal of Ideas, Analysis, and Debate (U.S.)
New Left Review (UK)
New Political Economy (UK)
New Politics: A Journal of Socialist Thought (U.S.)
News and Letters (U.S.)
Our Times: Canada's Independent Labour Magazine (Canada)
Politics and Society (U.S.)
Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy (Australia)
Poverty and Race (U.S.)
Pursuit of Happiness: A Journal of Radical Social Critique (U.S.)
Race & Class: A Journal for Black and Third World Liberation (UK)
Race, Gender & Class: An Interdisciplinary and Multicultural Journal (U.S.)
Radical America (U.S.)
Radical Chains (UK)
Radical History Review (U.S.)
Realidad Economico: Revista de Economico (Argentina)
Red Pepper: The Magazine for Free Radicals (UK)
Religious Socialism (publication of the Religion and Socialism Commission of the
Democratic Socialists of America (U.S.)
Resurgence Magazine (UK)
Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture, and Society (U.S.)
Review of Black Political Economy (Australia)

RESOURCE LIST

Review of Political Economy (U.S.)
Review of Radical Political Economics (U.S.)
Review of Social Economy (UK)
Revolutionary Marxism Today (U.S.)
Revolutionary Worker (U.S.)
Science & Society: An Independent Journal of Marxism (U.S.)
Socialism and Democracy (U.S.)
Socialist Affairs: The Journal of the Socialist International (UK)
Socialist Register (UK)
Socialist Renewal (UK)
Socialist Review (U.S.)
Sociologie du Travail (labor) (France)
Spare Change (U.S.)
Stay Free (UK)
Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review (Canada)
The Corporate Examiner: A Publication Examining Policies and Practices of Major U.S. Corporations (U.S.)
The Hammer: A Working Class Journal of Cultural Thought and Action (U.S.)
The Laborer (U.S.)
Third World Quarterly: Journal of Emerging Areas (UK)
Third World Resurgence (Philippines)
Tradeswomen (U.S.)
Union Democracy Review (U.S.)
White Collar (U.S.)
Working-Class Notes Newsletter (U.S.)
Working USA (U.S.)
Workplace: Journal of Academic Labor (U.S.)

SUGGESTED READINGS

Advertising and the American Dream, Roland Marchand
Althusser: A Critical Reader, (Ed.) Gregory Elliott
America Besieged, Michael Parenti
America's Forgotten Majority: Why the White Working Class Still Matters, Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers
America's Working Man, David Halle
Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari
A Radical Democratic Critique of Capitalist Education, Richard Brosio
Automobile Workers and the American Dream, Ely Chinoy
Battling for American Labor: Wobblies, Craft Workers, and the Making of the Union Movement, Howard Kimeldorf
Behind the Label: Inequality in the Los Angeles Apparel Industry, Edna Bonacich and Richard Appelbaum
Better Red: The Writing and Resistance of Tillie Olsen and Meridel Le Sueur, Constance Coiner
Blue Collar World: Studies of the American Worker, (Eds.) Arthur Shostak and William Gomberg
Bridging the Class Divide and Other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing, Linda Stout
Business and Religion in the American 1920s, Rolf Lundén

RESOURCE LIST

- Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, Joseph A. Schumpeter
- Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor*, Jefferson Cowie
- Chaos or Community: Seeking Solutions, Not Scapegoats for Bad Economics*, Holly Sklar
- Cheap Amusements*, Kathy Peiss
- Che Guevara, Paulo Freire and the Pedagogy of Revolution*, Peter McLaren
- Class*, (Ed.) Patrick Joyce
- Class: A Guide through the American Status System*, Paul Fussell
- Class and Politics in the United States*, Richard Hamilton
- Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap*, Richard Rothstein
- Class and Stratification: An Introduction to Current Debates*, Rosemary Crompton
- Class, Codes, and Control*, Basil Bernstein
- Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*, Erik Olin Wright
- Class, Crisis & the State*, Eric Olin Wright
- Classes, Power, and Conflict*, (Eds.) Anthony Giddens and David Held
- Class (Key Ideas)*, Stephen Edgell
- Class Struggle in Hollywood, 1930-1950*, Gerald Horne
- Class Theory and History: Capitalism and Communism in the U.S.S.R.*, Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff
- Class Warfare: Interviews*, Noam Chomsky and David Barsamian
- Class War in America: How Economic and Political Conservatives are Exploiting Low- and Middle-Income American Families*, Charles M. Kelly
- Coal: A Human History*, Barbara Freese
- Coalitions across the Class Divide: Lessons from the Labor, Peace, and Environmental Movement*, Fred Rose
- Common Sense and a Little Fire: Women and Working-Class Politics in the United States, 1900-1965*, Annelise Orleck
- Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, John Perkins
- Consumption (Key Ideas)*, Robert Bocock
- Controlling the Dangerous Classes: A Critical Introduction to the History of Criminal Justice*, Randall G. Sheldon
- Corporation Nation: How Corporations are Taking over Our Lives and What We Can Do About It*, Charles Derber
- Counterrevolution & Revolt*, Herbert Marcuse
- Crossing the Class and Color Lines: From Public Housing to White Suburbia*, Leonard Rubinowitz and James Rosenbaum
- Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change*, (Ed.) Sally Munt
- Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers*, Rick Fantasia
- Death by a Thousand Cuts: The Fight over Taxing Inherited Wealth*, Michael Graetz and Ian Shapiro
- Democracy against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism*, Ellen Meiksins Wood
- Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville
- Detroit: I Do My Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution*, Dan Georgakas, Marvin Surkin and Manning Marable
- Development, Crisis, and Class Struggle: Learning from Japan and the East*, Paul Burkett and Martin Hart-Landsberg
- Disposable Domestics: Immigrant Women Workers in the Global Economy*, Grace Chang
- Dividing Classes: How the Middle Class Negotiates and Rationalizes School Advantage*, Ellen Brantlinger
- Downsizing in America: Reality, Causes, and Consequences*, William Baumol, Alan Blinder and Edward Wolff
- Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*, Robert D. Bullard
- Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity*, Chuck Collins and Felice Yeskel
- Economic Life in America*, James Heintz, Nancy Folbre, the Center for Popular Economics, United for a Fair Economy, and the National Priorities Project
- Eight Hours for What We Will*, Roy Rosenzweig
- Empire of Capital*, Ellen Meiksins Wood
- Falling from Grace: Downward Mobility in the Age of Affluence*, Katherine Newman
- Film and the American Left*, M. Keith Booker

RESOURCE LIST

- Forbidden Workers: Illegal Chinese Immigrants and American Labor*, Peter Kwong
- For Crying Out Loud: Women's Poverty in the United States*, (Eds.) Diane Dujon and Ann Withorn
- Framed: Labor and the Corporate Media*, Christopher Martin
- From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Max Weber
- Gender, Race and Class in Media* (Eds.) Gail Dines and Jean Humez
(*Be sure to see *Chapter 7*—"The Meaning of Memory: Family, Class and Ethnicity in Early Network Television" by George Lipsitz, and *Chapter 46*—"Ralph, Fred, Archie and Homer: Why Television Keeps Recreating the White Male Working-Class Buffoon" by Richard Butsch, as these two studies helped to inspire the film *Class Dismissed*.)
- Getting By On the Minimum: The Lives of Working-Class Women*, Jennifer Johnson
- Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform*, Jean Anyon
- Growing Up Girl: Psychological Explorations of Gender and Class*, Valerie Walkerdine, Helen Lucey and June Melody
- Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, Karl Marx
- Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression*, Robin D.G. Kelley
- Hard Pressed in the Heartland: The Hormel Strike and the Future of the Labor Movement*, Peter Rachleff
- Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*, Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss
- Hidden Hands: International Perspectives on Children's Work and Labour*, (Eds.) Phillip Mizen, Christopher Pole and Angela Bolton
- Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains & What the Mountains Did to the Movies*, J.W. Williamson
- History and Class Consciousness*, Georg Lukacs
- How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, Manning Marable
- How Class Works*, Stanley Aronowitz
- Ideology*, Terry Eagleton
- Imperialism and World Economy*, Nikolai Bukharin
- Imperialism: Theoretical Directions*, (Ed.) Ronald Chilcote
- Inequality at the Starting Gate: Social Background Differences in Achievement as Children Begin School*, Valerie Lee and David Burkam
- In the Tracks of Historical Materialism*, Perry Anderson
- Introducing Keynesian Economics*, Peter Pugh and Chris Garratt
- Introduction to Political Economy*, Charles Sackrey and Geoffrey Schneider
- Introducing Trotsky and Marxism*, Tariq Ali and Phil Evans
- It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States*, Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks
- Japanese Workers in Protest: An Ethnography of Consciousness and Experience*, Christena L. Turner
- Keeping the Corporate Image: Public Relations and Business, 1900-1950*, Richard Tedlow
- Labor Text*, Laura Hapke
- Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*, Nan Enstad
- Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Paul Willis
- Learning to Labor in New Times*, (Eds.) Nadine Dolby and Greg Dimitriadis
- Let Them Eat Ketchup: The Politics of Poverty and Inequality*, Sheila Collins
- Liberating Memory*, Janet Zandy
- Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams*, Alfred Lubrano
- Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, Eric Lott
- Low-Wage America: How Employers Are Reshaping Opportunity in the Workplace*, (Eds.) Eileen Appelbaum, Annette Bernhardt and Richard Murnane
- Making Progress: Education and Culture in New Times*, Dennis Carlson
- Mao for Beginners*, Ruis and Friends
- Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 until Today*, Raya Dunayevskaya
- Marxism and Native Americans*, Ward Churchill and Winona LaDuke
- Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, (Eds.) Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg

RESOURCE LIST

- Marxism for Our Times: C.L.R. James on Revolutionary Organization*, (Ed.) Martin Glaberman
- Masses, Classes and the Public Sphere*, (Eds.) Mike Hill and Warren Montag
- Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference, and Women's Lives*, (Eds.) Rosemary Hennesst and Chrys Ingraham
- Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America*, Michael Denning
- Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*, Robert Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd
- Modern Capitalism: The Changing Balance of Public and Private Power*, Andrew Shonfield
- Moses Hess: Prophet of Communism and Zionism*, Shlomo Aviner
- Negative Dialectics*, Theodore Adorno
- New Working-Class Studies*, (Eds.) John Russo and Sherry Lee Linkon
- Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*, Barbara Ehrenreich
- On the Line*, Harvey Swados
- Organizing the Landscape*, (Ed.) Andrew Herod
- Out at Work*, (Eds.) Kitty Krupat and Patrick McCreary
- Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire
- Perfectly Legal: The Covert Campaign to Rig Our Tax System to Benefit the Super Rich—and Cheat Everybody Else*, David Cay Johnson
- Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward
- Poor Worker's Unions: Rebuilding Labor from Below*, Vanessa Tait
- Portraits in Steel*, Michael Frisch and Milton Rogovin
- Post-Fordism and Social Form: A Marxist Debate on the Post-Fordist State*, (Eds.) Werner Bonefeld and John Holloway
- Poverty in America: A Handbook*, John Iceland
- Prisoners of the American Dream*, Mike Davis
- Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution*, (Eds.) Elizabeth Perry, Li Xun and Mark Selden
- Queerly Classed: Gay Men and Lesbians Write about Class*, Susan Raffo
- Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, (Ed.) Paula Rothenberg
- Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*, Robin D.G. Kelley
- Radical Hollywood*, Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner
- Radicalism in American Silent Films, 1909-1929*, Michael Slade Shull
- Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s*, George Lipsitz
- Reading Capital Politically*, Harry Cleaver
- Reading Lives: Working-Class Children and Literacy Learning*, Deborah Hicks
- Reclaiming America: Nike, Clean Air, and the New National Activism*, Randy Shaw
- Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron
- Rethinking Working-Class History*, Dipesh Chakrabarty
- Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prisons: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice*, Jeffrey H. Reiman
- Rosa Luxemburg: Writings and Reflections*, Rosa Luxemburg
- Schooling in Capitalist America*, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis
- School Smart and Motherwise: Working-Class Women's Identity and Schooling*, Wendy Luttrell
- Selections from Political Writings*, Antonio Gramsci
- Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-60*, Elizabeth Fones-Wolf
- Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battles for Workers Rights at Wal-Mart*, Lisa Featherstone
- Shut Out: Low Income Mothers and Higher Education in Post-Welfare America*, (Eds.) Valerie Polakow, Sandra Butler, Luisa Stormer Deprez and Peggy Kahn
- Social Mobility in Industrial Society*, Seymour Martin Lipset and Reinhard Bendix
- Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism: The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism*, Steven M. Buechler
- Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*, David Harvey
- Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline*, Aihwa Ong

RESOURCE LIST

- State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*, Nelson Lichtenstein
- State, Power, and Socialism*, Nicos Poulantzas
- Stealing Innocence: Youth, Corporate Power, and the Politics of Culture*, Henry Giroux
- Steeltown U.S.A.: Work and Memory in Youngstown*, Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo
- Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era*, David Brody
- Strange Love: Or How We Learn to Stop Worrying and Love the Market*, Robin Truth Goodman and Kenneth J. Saltman
- Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood*, Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar
- Strike!*, Jeremy Brecher
- Suburbia Sweatshops: The Fight for Immigrant Rights*, Jennifer Gordon
- Take the Rich off Welfare*, Mark Zepezaver and Arthur Naiman
- Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*, Michael W. Apple
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