



New Faculty Fall 2023

Cameron Black, Assistant Professor of Labor Studies, is a historian of the United States and his fields of interests are in Nineteenth and Twentieth century Labor and Cultural history, Student-Athlete Protest in the 1960s, and the History of Capitalism. He studies the intersections of race, class and labor, and in particular, how we think about who qualifies as labor and what processes go into these distinctions. His dissertation, "From the Line of Scrimmage to the Picket Line: Student-Athlete Protest in an Age of Protest, 1968-1972," focuses around student-athlete protest movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s and analyzes how student-athletes were conceptualized, managed and disciplined like labor from the early twentieth century instead of like students. He interweaves questions of race, labor, and culture to look at how labor resists the encroachment of management within their personal and professional lives, and how management and corporations handle these resistance efforts.

His published work looks at enslaved watchmen in the Atlantic World during the late 18th and early nineteenth centuries, and how they simultaneously helped structure the boundaries of enslavement that plantation owners used to manage their plantations provided an avenue for resistance efforts by enslaved persons. For planters, these watchmen were necessary for managing a plantation, yet were also powerful louses for resistance. He also analyzed the development of the National Basketball League from 1970-2000, and argues that the NBA's growth stemmed from new collective bargaining agreements put in place during the 1980s to implement a workplace culture that fit within the broader conservative backlash during the decade. This not only raised revenue but assimilated its growing population of African American players to traditional workplace norms that simultaneously attempted to counter racist stereotypes about their "natural" talents and legitimized ideas that Black players needed to be carefully managed.

As a graduate student in the History Department at the University of California-Berkeley, he received fellowships from the American Historical Association, the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, and the Bancroft Library.



Nantina Vgontzas, Assistant Professor of Labor Studies, studies the politics of labor, climate, and technology. They received their BA in political science from the University of Pennsylvania and PhD in sociology from New York University. Presently, their research is focused on the rapidly expanding logistics sector. Not only is this sector a key node in the global commodity circulation, but as ecommerce firms increasingly orient their delivery operations around major metropolitan markets, logistics is positioned to reshape social and political alliances in global cities. Combining engaged ethnography with political economy, Nantina examines how the efforts of warehouse workers to improve their working conditions intersect with community efforts to mitigate the environmental harms of warehouse expansion.

Their work has been published in *New Global Studies*, *Labor Studies Journal*, *Boston Review*, *The Nation*, and other outlets, with support from the Center for Engaged Scholarship, Urban Democracy Lab, AI Now Institute, and Center for Applied Data Ethics. They have presented at the American Sociological Association, International Labor Process Association, Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Penn Annenberg School for Communication, Labor Research Action Network, and other venues. At SLU, they teach *Labor and the Economy*, *Labor in the Era of Globalization*, and other courses.