

Negotiating Crisis: Neoliberal Power in Austerity Ireland

Dr Nicholas Kiersey, Ohio University

3rd March 2016, 4 – 6 pm

Location: University of Middlesex, Hendon Campus, College Building Board Room C219, London NW4 4BT

Nicholas will present a paper that is linked to his forthcoming book *NEGOTIATING CRISIS: NEOLIBERAL POWER IN AUSTERITY IRELAND* (Rowman & Littlefield 2016). His talk will identify some of the key issues of distributive justice prompted by Ireland's recent economic history, demonstrating a theoretical interpretation of the stakes of this reading in terms of the concept of precarity. Starting with a brief review of current debates surrounding the concept of precarious life and its relationship to indebtedness, the paper proceeds to elaborate the Irish case as an exemplary model of a debt economy (Lazzarato, 2012). Offering a brief history of Irish economic development, the research focuses on the nation's total failure to develop a meaningful social housing policy, the decision of successive generations to ignore indigenous industrial development, and the embrace in its place of a strategic dependency on a low corporate tax rate in order to attract foreign direct investment.

Next the paper addresses the evolution of 'social partnership,' the country's practice of staging periodic centralized wage negotiations. While the latter practice has functioned historically to stabilize industrial unrest in the country, its success has been won at the expense of strategies to develop a meaningful social wage and, in the context of the current crisis, has constituted a seriously distorted metric for assessing the impact of austerity on distributive justice. Finally, Nicholas's work examines the emergence of debt as a key problematic in the 'Tiger' years, and its status in relation to public life today. While popular accounts continue to replicate the official government line of a 'homegrown' crisis, the emergence of indebtedness suggests lines of affinity with crisis-prone dynamics of neoliberal finance elsewhere.

Bio: Nicholas Kiersey (PhD, Virginia Tech) is Associate Professor in Political Science at Ohio University. His work focuses on the place of crisis and subjectivity in the reproduction of capitalist power. Recently published articles of his can be found in *Global Society*, *Global Discourse*, and *Capital & Class*. He recently co-edited the volume *Battlestar Galactica and International Relations* with Iver Neumann (Routledge, 2013). His current book project is entitled *Negotiating Crisis: Neoliberal Power in Austerity Ireland*, and is set to be published by Rowman & Littlefield in 2016.

University of Middlesex Law and Politics and Conference for Socialist Economists (CSE) South Group Research Seminar