

Work & Wellbeing: Reimagining Labour, Care, and the Common Good

Information

- **Programme type:** Minor (interdisciplinary, Social Sciences and Humanities)
- **Workload:** 30 ECTS (~750–900 hours of study, including ~140 contact hours)
- **Duration:** One semester (March 2026 – June 2026)
- **Delivery format:** Hybrid – in-person sessions in Rijeka combined with online modules
- **Language of instruction:** English
- **Organiser:** Centre for Advanced Studies Southeast Europe (CAS SEE), University of Rijeka
- **Programme Coordinator:** Dr. Valeria Graziano, Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
- **Tuition fees:** Free of charge for students of the University of Rijeka and YUFE partner universities; €500 for other participants
- **Assessment:** A mix of written assignments, collaborative projects, and public presentations (depending on course and Challenge design)

To enrol or find out more: cas@uniri.hr

Overview

Work shapes our lives in profound ways, structuring our time, shaping our identities, and influencing our collective futures. Yet in the twenty-first century, work is increasingly marked by exhaustion, precarity, automation, and the erosion of care systems. These pressures intersect with climate instability and the unsustainable ways we consume and produce, raising urgent questions: *What does “good work” mean today? How can wellbeing be protected and reimagined in the face of such transformations?*

The **Minor in Work & Wellbeing: Reimagining Labour, Care, and the Common Good** offers an interdisciplinary space to critically investigate these questions and to experiment with new approaches. Drawing on sociology, anthropology, economics, law, cultural studies, and philosophy, the programme provides both theoretical foundations and practical tools for understanding how labour, care, and wellbeing are intertwined in times of global crisis and rapid change.

Students will work across disciplines and cultures in a hybrid learning environment, combining in-person intensives in Rijeka with flexible online study. At the centre of the Minor is a **Challenge Project**: a mentored, collaborative capstone that translates research into real-world outputs such as campaigns, policy briefs, podcasts, or consultancy blueprints. In this way, the programme not only builds critical knowledge but also develops applied skills and portfolio-ready projects that connect academic inquiry with public impact.

The Challenge at the Core

At the heart of the *Work & Wellbeing* Minor is the **Challenge Project**, which is a mentored, student-led journey that turns critical reflection into situated practice. Instead of concluding with a traditional exam or essay, the semester builds toward a collaborative intervention rooted in real-life contexts, fieldwork, and partnerships.

Working individually or in small teams, students identify a pressing issue at the intersection of labour, care, and wellbeing that resonates with their own concerns or those of local communities and organisations. Through workshops, mentorship, and **bespoke collaborations with external partners**, they design responses that link theory with lived realities.

Possible outputs include:

- a campaign addressing workplace burnout or digital overload,
- a consultancy blueprint co-developed with an organisation exploring wellbeing strategies,
- a podcast or zine amplifying workers' imaginaries of the future,
- a policy brief on inequalities in labour markets,
- a creative toolkit for peer-support in activist, student, or professional communities.

The Challenge culminates in a **public presentation**, giving students the opportunity to share their work with peers, practitioners, and broader audiences, and to test their ideas in dialogue with others.

By the end of the programme, participants do not only carry new knowledge: they leave with a **portfolio-ready project**, grounded in **real-world research and collaborations**, demonstrating their ability to connect critical inquiry with social and institutional change.

Programme Structure

The *Work & Wellbeing* Minor carries **30 ECTS** and is delivered across one semester in a **hybrid format**: online learning complemented by intensive in-person sessions in Rijeka. The programme is structured to provide strong theoretical foundations, solid methodological training, and the opportunity to put ideas into practice through a collaborative capstone project.

Core Courses (Compulsory)

Discursive Theories and Practices: Work and Wellbeing (5 ECTS)

Introduces foundational theories and debates around work, labour, and wellbeing. Students engage with classical and contemporary perspectives from sociology, anthropology, economics, and law, while also considering emerging issues such as digitalisation, gender equity, and labour precarity.

Research Methods and Techniques (7 ECTS)

Provides systematic training in qualitative and quantitative approaches to researching work and wellbeing. Students develop practical skills in survey design, interviewing, and data analysis, while also reflecting critically on ethics, intersectionality, and the politics of knowledge. The course combines lectures, workshops, and mentored research tasks, culminating in the design of a research proposal.

The Challenge (8 ECTS)

An interdisciplinary capstone project where students design a situated response to a concrete issue related to work and wellbeing. Projects are developed through fieldwork and collaborations, moving from problem-framing to public presentation. Possible outputs include research essays, podcasts, campaigns, policy briefs, or creative toolkits.

Electives (Choose Two, 5 ECTS each)

Post-Work Scenarios: Questioning Work and Imagining Alternatives

Explores post-work imaginaries and critiques of the work ethic. Students examine policy debates around universal basic income, automation, and collective care, alongside artistic and cultural proposals envisioning futures beyond wage labour.

(The Right to) Education and Transition to the Labour Market

Examines how education policies, lifelong learning, and social rights shape transitions into the labour market. Topics include globalisation, technological change, and demographic shifts, and their impact on employability and wellbeing.

Living Labour: The Anthropology of Work

Analyses labour through anthropological perspectives, with a focus on neoliberal restructuring, migration, and globalisation. Students engage with ethnographic accounts of financial institutions, service industries, and worker resistance.

Embodied Conditions: Health Practices and Struggles

Explores health and care as socio-political constructs, engaging feminist, ecological, and decolonial approaches. Students examine how health is defined, contested, and lived in diverse contexts.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion: Global Thinking and Local Resistance

Investigates institutional cultures and practices of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Special focus is given to post-transition societies, analysing both compliance and resistance.

Labour Economics

Introduces the main principles of labour economics, covering wage inequality, labour market regulation, and the role of collective bargaining. Includes critical discussions of economic models.

Generational Discourses: Youth and Work

Examines youth labour through a generational lens, with emphasis on aspirations, challenges, and shifting employment trajectories.

Learning Outcomes and Pathways

Completing the *Work & Wellbeing* Minor means more than adding 30 ECTS to your record. It means developing a critical understanding of how labour, care, and wellbeing shape our lives, and gaining the tools to connect that knowledge with practice. Along the way, you will learn to use qualitative and quantitative methods, design projects rooted in real-world contexts, and collaborate across cultures and disciplines.

Through the Challenge Project and elective courses, you will also build a portfolio of work, such as campaigns, toolkits, podcasts, policy briefs, or consultancy blueprints, that demonstrates your capacity to translate research into meaningful interventions. These experiences prepare you for multiple pathways: contributing to NGOs, unions, and social movements; engaging in cultural or educational initiatives; pursuing postgraduate study; or bringing a critical perspective on wellbeing and inclusion into the private sector.

Who Is It For?

The *Work & Wellbeing* Minor is open to all students and professionals who are curious about the shifting meanings of work and its entanglements with wellbeing, care, and sustainability. It is particularly suited for:

- **Students** from the University of Rijeka, YUFE, and Erasmus+ programmes who wish to broaden their studies with an interdisciplinary perspective that connects social sciences and humanities.
- **Practitioners** working in NGOs, unions, cultural organisations, education, or policy, who want to deepen their understanding of labour and wellbeing in order to enrich their practice.

- **Professionals in the private sector**, especially those engaged in areas such as organisational culture, inclusion, or workplace wellbeing, who seek critical tools and new perspectives.
- **Anyone interested in alternatives**, from activists and community organisers to those exploring questions of care, equity, and the common good in their own lives and work.

Teaching Faculty and Guest Contributors 2026

Dr. Valeria Graziano – Associate Professor at CAS SEE, UniRi; works on precarious labour, organising, and post-work futures; coordinator of *Pirate Care* and EU COST Action *Toolkit of Care*; **Dr. Sanja Bojanić** – Executive Director of CAS SEE; political theorist focused on feminist philosophy, media, and cultural critique; led EU projects *SPEAR* and *Cultures of Rejections*; **Dr. Eva Sophia Myers** – Former gender equality consultant at the University of Southern Denmark; international expert on institutional change, diversity, and inclusion in academia; **Dr. Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela** – Professor of Sociology at the University of Ljubljana; leading researcher on gender and economy, industrial relations, and economic democracy; **Dr. Selma Porobić** – Migration scholar with a PhD from Lund University; specialist in forced displacement, refugee rights, and education for peace; **Dr. Marko Kovačić** – Political scientist at UniRi and Director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies; works on youth participation, civic engagement, and public policy; **Dr. Danijela Sokolić** – Professor of Management and Organization, Faculty of Economics, UniRi; researcher on labour economics, organisational change, and welfare sustainability; **Dr. Sanja Puljar D'Alessio** – Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology, UniRi; explores visual anthropology, organisational cultures, and ethnographic film; **Daria Glavan Šćulac** – Lawyer and Head of International Legal Affairs, UniRi; works on governance, institutional ethics, and diversity policies in higher education; **Dr. Sara Nikolić** – Research Fellow at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Belgrade; studies urban commons, housing, and post-socialist activist practices.

Additional guest speakers and contributors will be announced for the 2026 edition of the Minor.