Guy Standing conceptualizes the current global class structure in terms of seven groups, “not all of which are classes in either the Marxian or Weberian senses” (2014, 1). These groups include the *plutocracy, elite, salariat, proficians, old proletariat, precariat*, and *lumpen-precariat*. Our discussion today will focus primarily on the *precariat*.

Standing argues that the *precariat* is an “emerging dangerous class” (2014, 6) that we can think of as a “*class-in-the-making*, if not yet a *class-for-itself*” (2013, 11). He defines the *precariat* as people who lack seven forms of labor-related security: labor market security, employment security, job security, work security, skill reproduction security, income security, and representation security (2013, 17).

Do you think we should consider the *precariat* as a distinct class? If so, does this pose a challenge to the idea of contradictory class locations? If not, how should we categorize the *precariat* in our conception of class structure?

**PART II: DISCUSSION IN SMALL GROUPS**

1. Our readings proposed several different approaches to explaining the variation in income across different class locations in contemporary, complex societies. The Weberian approach focuses on the organizational characteristics of different occupations. For instance, doctors can charge a higher rate per hour for their professional services because (1) they have a monopoly over the legal provision of health services which they enforce through a licensing system (i.e. a form of social closure); and (2) it is very expensive to go to medical school and the cost of medical training is later compensated in the form of remunerations. The Marxist approach, which hinges upon the notion of exploitation, has suggested the idea of “skill rent” in order to explain this variation. In light of these two approaches, please consider the following interconnected questions: **What does “skill rent” exactly mean? How is it related to exploitation?** More specifically, **how does exploitation work when it is “built-in” organizational and institutional arrangements?** And finally, **how can the notion of exploitation be complemented by the notion of social closure?**

2. **What is the place of state employees in the class structure, as defined in Marxist terms?** Professor Wright offers several possible, linked solutions, such as dividing state jobs and their occupiers into those whose jobs are outside the class system (in terms of production) due to their work in the legal apparatus and those who produce social value, such as healthcare services. Another possibility is conceiving of a set of separate, non-capitalist relations he calls the "state mode of production." **Do these solutions solve the problem of state employees?**