Gendered Professions & The Transnational Care Economy

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Nursing lies at the heart of the "care economy." Involving work that requires intensive physical labor, person-to-person communication, and spatial proximity, the intimate nature of care work resists mechanization. In contrast to the production of commodities, the highly personalized labor of care is driven by human need rather than profit maximization. In nursing, skill entails the effective exercise of professional judgment. Focused on the cultivation and preservation of human capacities, this professional labor resists routinization and automation. The course explores recent efforts to heighten the profit-maximization potential of the care economy, and it considers the long-term implications of efforts to deskil and outsource care work.