

University of Washington
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Presents

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“Theorizing and Researching Creative Labor”

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Communications Building Room 126

Paid work is often exploitative, damaging and dangerous. Nevertheless, as well as safety and a decent wage, workers often seek satisfaction and self-realization through their employment. For many people now, creativity is one of the most desirable aspects of a job or career. People can of course be creative in any kind of work but some types of employment are commonly thought to offer greater possibilities for creativity than others. Amongst them are the very jobs that many graduates from communications and media degrees aspire to gain, in the media industries, sometimes the cultural industries, and increasingly, the creative industries.

But what is the nature of this creative work? Does it really offer less alienation and greater autonomy than other kinds of employment? How do creative workers understand the trade-offs between security and autonomy in this kind of labor? This talk examines these issues, drawing upon research carried out in three major creative or cultural industries: television, magazine journalism and music.

David Hesmondhalgh is Professor of Media and Music Industries in the Institute of Communications Studies at the University of Leeds, where he is Director of the Media Industries Research Centre (MIRC). His publications include *The Cultural Industries* (2nd edition, 2007), and five edited volumes: *The Media and Social Theory* (with Jason Toynbee, 2008), *Media Production* (2006), *Understanding Media: Inside Celebrity* (with Jessica Evans, 2005), *Popular Music Studies* (with Keith Negus, 2002) and *Western Music and its Others* (with Georgina Born, 2000).