Wright’s academic work has been centrally concerned with reconstructing the Marxist tradition of social theory and research in ways that attempt to make it more relevant to contemporary concerns and more cogent as a scientific framework of analysis. His empirical research has focused especially on the challenging character of class relations in developed capitalist societies.

Since 1992 he has directed the Real Utopias Project, which explores a range of proposals for new institutional designs that embody emancipatory ideals and yet are attentive to issues of pragmatic feasibility.