1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the early 1970s a number of prominent social scientists prophesized that the shift from an industrial society to a post-industrial or information or service economy promised to dramatically improve the health and safety of workers. Such a scenario would evolve as toxic workplaces were replaced by sanitized high tech processing plants at the same time as employers in clean and safe office and retail environments employed an ever-increasing majority of waged and salaried employees. Against this backdrop, this course will investigate and analyze the current state of work and health in Canada and elsewhere around the world. The course will be broken down into roughly three sections. The first section will be directed at developing a theoretical understanding of the political economy of work and health. This exercise will include making links between workplaces and the larger environment. Readings and discussion in the second section will examine a number of the more significant workplace and related environmental health issues, e.g., musculoskeletal injuries, violence, chronic respiratory diseases such as asbestosis and silicosis, and cancer. In the third section we will examine occupational health and safety and workers’ compensation laws with an eye to understanding the governance of workers’ health within capitalist societies.

2. TEXT/COURSEWARE

All required readings will be supplied by the instructor.

3. EVALUATION BREAKDOWN

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:
[1] Participation (30%) While not every topic will draw equal amounts of participation from individual students, it is expected that students will do all of the readings for each class and that each student will contribute to class discussion on a regular basis. Please keep in mind that while the number of times a person talks is not necessarily related to quality, neither can silence be taken as an indication of a person's knowledge of the topic.
[2] Student Presentation (20%) Each student will outline and critically analyze an article(s) chosen by the instructor. The grade will be based on the presentation and a typed summary handed in the following day.
[3] Essay (50%) Students will be expected to write a 15-20 page paper (3700 to 5000 words) on a topic directly related to course materials. The purpose of the essay is to
reflect on the course materials and to use this reflection to critically engage a topic of the students’ interest. **A short outline of the paper will be due for class discussion on Wednesday, November 23.** The paper is due Wednesday, December 14. Late papers will not be accepted unless there is a documented, medical reason.

4. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course addresses four University Graduate Degree Level Expectations. First, it involves students in an in-depth understanding of the foremost theories and empirical studies in the topics of workplace health, safety and workers’ compensation. Second, the analytical frameworks to which students are exposed in this course enables them to critically evaluate research and scholarship in the broad field of work and health. Third, the knowledge learned in this course is to be applied to the specific problems or issues they have chosen for their major essay assignment. Finally, the emphasis on student participation in this course serves to develop and strengthen their abilities and skills with respect to communicating their ideas in a clear and sophisticated manner.

5. SCHEDULE/READINGS

**Topic 1: Introduction: Bodies at Work- Issues**


**Topic 2: The Political Economy of Work and Health – 1**


**Topic 3: The Political Economy of Work and Health – 2**


**Topic 4: “Science,” Work & Health**


**Topic 5: “Science,” Medicine, Work & Health**


**Topic 6: Work & Health: The Body Diseased**


**Topic 7: Work & Health: The Body in Pain**


**Topic 8: Work & Health: Disasters – The Body Explodes**

Topic 9: Regulating Occupational Safety & Health – 1


Topic 10: Regulating Occupational Safety & Health – 2

[Discussion of essay outlines.]


Topic 11: Regulating the Injured Body: Workers’ Compensation – 1


Topic 12: Regulating The Injured Body: Workers’ Compensation - 2


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ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:  [http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/index.html](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/index.html)
Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at [http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf](http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Labour Studies staff does not date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of student papers. All papers should be submitted/returned in-class, in tutorials or during Professor/TA office hours. Instructors who utilize Avenue to Learn will provide instructions on that preference.

**Absence Reporting:** [http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/)  On-line self-reporting tool – illness lasting less than 3 days. Can only be used once per term. Instructors are not allowed to accept medical notes! These must be submitted to your Faculty office. In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please also communicate with the course instructor.

**Code of conduct:** [http://studentaffairs.mcmaster.ca](http://studentaffairs.mcmaster.ca)
“McMaster University is a community dedicated to furthering learning, intellectual inquiry, the dissemination of knowledge and personal and professional development. Membership in this community implies acceptance of the principle of mutual respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study work and live within it.”

**Computer use** in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

**Course Modifications:** The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email AND Avenue to Learn (if used by instructor) regularly during the term to note any changes.
E-Mail Communication Policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences: all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor/TA receives a communication from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Please always include student name, ID, course # and TA name in messages.

Evaluations (Online): http://evals.mcmaster.ca, and log in via MACID. These help faculty and the School of Labour Studies to meet our goal of continually improving teaching effectiveness. All students in the course are invited and encouraged to complete the evaluation.

Student Accessibility Services: http://sas.mcmaster.ca/ MUSC-B107 905-525-9140 x28652
NOTE: Disclosure of disability-related information is personal and confidential. Student Accessibility Services offers various supports for students with disabilities. We work with full time and part time students. SAS provides or assists students with their academic and disability-related needs, including: Learning Strategies, Assistive Technologies, Test & Exam Administration, Note-Taking Programs, and Classroom Accommodations. *Please inform the instructor if there are disability needs that are not being met.

McMaster University Policy on Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy

Student Success Centre: http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/ GH-110 905-525-9140 x24254
Some services include: student orientation, academic skills, volunteerism, educational planning, employment and career transition. Writing Support: http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html

Student Wellness Centre: http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/ MUSC-B101 905-525-9140 x27700
Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counselling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services.