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 discussions in the second section on current issues will involve in-depth analyses of workplace and environmental “disasters” in Newfoundland and Bhopal, India. In the third section we will examine occupational health and safety and workers’ compensation laws and regulations 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 (20%) 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 Presentations (2X15%) Each student will make two formal presentations. In these presentations, students will outline and critically analyze articles chosen by the instructor from the required course readings. The grades will be based on: a/ how well the student outlines and summarizes the major concepts and points of the articles; b/ how well the student integrates past course readings; c/ the quality of the questions the student presents for class discussion; and, d/ how well the student presents this material to the class.

[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 Thursday, March 15. The paper is due Thursday, April 12. 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

1. David McNally, *Dissecting the Labouring Body: Frankenstein, Political Anatomy and

**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 in Pain**


**Topic 7: Work & Health: The Body Diseased**


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

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**NOTE:** For Topics 8 & 10, the class will be divided into two groups with one group reading “The Ocean Ranger” and the other group reading “Surviving Bhopal”.

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**Topic 9: Regulating Work & Health – 1**

[Discussion of essay outlines.]


**Topic 10: Regulating Work & Health – 2**


**Topic 11: Regulating the Injured Body – 1**


**Topic 12: Regulating the Injured Body - 2**

2. Katherine Lippel et. al., “Legal protections governing the occupational safety and
health and workers’ compensation of temporary employment agency workers in
Canada: reflections on regulatory effectiveness”, Policy and Practice in Health and

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ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: 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

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:

All papers should be submitted/returned in-class or during Prof. office hours.

Code of conduct: 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 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, 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 receives a communication from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply
at his or her discretion. Please always include student name, ID, and course # in messages.
**Evaluations (Online):** 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 - Link is provided near the end of term.

**Student Accessibility Services:** [http://sas.mcmaster.ca/](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/](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](http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html)

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