

# Bodies at Work: Politics, Science, Law & Occupational Health

Labour Studies 780 / Winter 2021

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**OFFICE HOURS (Zoom or phone):** by appointment

**LECTURE:** Tuesdays, 11:30am-2:30pm (Zoom)

*Classes will be recorded and posted on Avenue. However, since it is a graduate seminar and participation is evaluated, students are expected to attend. Please email me when you are unable to attend class.*

\*\*\*Due to the delayed start of classes provided by the University, some details and deadlines regarding course content and assessments in the published course outline may be changed. Please check Avenue to Learn for the most up-to-date information for this course. The course outline on Avenue to Learn will supersede previously published outlines until published course outlines are updated. \*\*\*

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## Course Description

This course draws on interdisciplinary literature to investigate the current state of work and health in Canada and around the world. It will begin by developing a theoretical understanding of the political economy of work and health. Readings and discussions will then examine topics such as the embodiment of gendered, racialized and other forms of labour market inequality; the regulation of injured bodies and minds and role of the medico-legal system; and the impact of work injury and disease over the life course, and across generations and communities.

## **Course Learning Objectives**

In this course students will:

- Develop an in-depth understanding of the main theories and debates in work and health in Canada and globally.
- Identify and critically evaluate scholarship in the field of work and health.
- Apply concepts and ideas learned in class in the writing of a blog post and essay.
- Strengthen oral communication skills through class discussions and presentations.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

Readings: All readings are available on Avenue to Learn.

## **Course Evaluation Breakdown**

### **Participation 25%**

Students are expected to read all materials and engage in discussions during class that demonstrate reflection on and a grasp of the materials. Students will be evaluated on their ability to speak to the readings and respond to other students' ideas in an informed and thoughtful way. The quality of interventions is more important than their frequency. Students will also take turns monitoring the chat to support participation in class discussions.

### **Presentation & class moderation 15%**

Each student will make one presentation in which they will critically discuss two of the week's readings. Students should avoid simply providing a summary of each reading but instead should focus on making connections between the readings. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes and should make use of PowerPoint or other visual aid to help structure and enliven the presentation. Students are encouraged to use examples, illustrations and case studies to support their points. Students may choose to pre-record their presentation. After the presentation, students will lead a 45-minute class discussion for which they should prepare questions that promote discussion, critique and reflection. The discussion questions should also offer an opportunity to draw in the week's readings not covered in the presentation. Students will sign-up for a presentation date on January 19.

### **Blog post – 20% due February 9**

Students will write a blog post on a recent news story that pertains to health and safety. The post should include an analysis with supporting evidence (not merely one's opinions). It should be approximately 1000 words (4 pages double-spaced) not including references. Students should cite class materials and/or additional resources as needed. Examples of blog posts may be found here:

<https://www.onthemovepartnership.ca/people-who-carry-food-and-fuel-for-the-world-are-trapped-at-sea-a-crewing-crisis-in-the-context-of-covid-19/>

<https://www.onthemovepartnership.ca/a-virus-that-doesnt-discriminate/>

### **Essay: Anatomy of a Case – 40% due April 13**

Drawing on class materials and additional literature, students will “dissect” a health and safety disaster or injury or illness case. The purpose of the essay is to analyse rather than describe. This means that students should develop a thesis in relation to their topic and present evidence in support of their thesis. Essays should be 3000-3750 words (12-15 pages double-spaced) not including references. No minimum number of references is required.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 / January 12 Introduction**

- Harvey, D. 1998. The body as an accumulation strategy. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 16(4): 401-421.
- Bellaby P. 1999. Docile bodies. The making of the worker. In: *Sick from work: The body in employment*. Chapter 3.

### **Week 2 / January 19 A Political Economy Lens**

- Healy, T. 2018. Labouring bodies in the global economy. *Structural Violence and Occupational Health*. In *Global Health and Security. Critical Feminist Perspectives* (O'Manique and Fourie Eds). New York: Routledge. Chapter 10.
- Bambra, C. 2011. Work, worklessness and the political economy of health inequalities. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. 65(9), 746-750.
- Armstrong et al. 2020. Privatization and COVID-19: A deadly combination for nursing homes. In: *Vulnerable: The law, policy and ethics of COVID-19*. Flood C.M. et al. (eds). University of Ottawa Press.
- Weber, L. and Hilfinger Messias D.K. 2012. Mississippi front-line recovery work

after Hurricane Katrina: An analysis of the intersections of gender, race and class in advocacy, power relations, and health. *Social Science and Medicine*, 74: 1833-1841.

**Note: Presentation sign-up today**

### **Week 3 / January 26 Global Perspectives**

- Mezzadri A. 2015. Garment sweatshop regimes: The informalisation of social responsibility over health and safety provisions. Working Paper 30/15. Centre for Development Policy and Research, University of London. Pages 1-16.
- Prentice, R. 2018. Precarious bodies: Occupational risk assemblages in Bolivia and Trinidad. *Global Labour Journal*. 9(1): 41-56.
- Liu, W. 2015. The embodied crises of neoliberal globalization: the lives and narratives of Filipina migrant domestic workers. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 50: 80-88.
- Rocha-Jimenez, T. et al. 2016. Migration, violence, and safety among migrant sex workers: a qualitative study in two Guatemalan communities. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*. 18(9): 965-979.

### **Week 4 / February 2 Minds at Work / Violence at Work**

- Andrews BK, Karcz S, Rosenberg B. 2008. Hooked on a feeling: emotional labor as an occupational hazard of the post-industrial age. *New Solutions*, 18: 245-255.
- Lippel K. 2011. Law, public policy and mental health in the workplace. *HealthCare Papers*. 11(sp): 20-37.
- Milloy J. 2017. Blood, Sweat and Fear. *Violence at Work in the North American Auto Industry, 1960-80*. Vancouver: UBC Press. Pages 156-171.
- Brophy, J.T., Keith, M.M., Hurley, M. 2018. Assaulted and unheard. *Violence against healthcare staff*. *New Solutions*. 27(4): 581-606.

### **Week 5 / February 9 The Blame Game**

- Barab, J. 2006. Acts of God, acts of men: The invisibility of workplace death. In *Worker safety under siege: labor, capital, and the politics of workplace safety in a deregulated world* (Mogensen V. ed). Pages 3-16
- Quinlan M., Mayhew C., and Johnstone R. 2006. Trucking tragedies: The hidden disaster of mass death in the long-haul road transport industry. In *Working disasters. The politics of recognition and response* (Eric Tucker Ed). Baywood Publishing. Chapter 2 (pages 19-64).

- Barnetson B. and Foster J. 2012. Bloody lucky: The careless worker myth in Alberta, Canada. *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health*. 18(2): 135-146.
- Premji, S. 2019. Discourse on culture in research on immigrant and migrant workers' health. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*. 62(6): 460-470.
- Quintner, J.L. 1995. The Australian RSI debate: stereotyping and medicine. *Disability and Rehabilitation*. 17(5): 256-262.

**Note: Blog post due today**

## **Week 6 / Mid-Term recess (Feb. 15-21)**

**~There are no readings for this week~**

## **Week 7 / February 23 Regulating Workplace Risks**

- Smith D. 2000. The health and safety movement and the coming of the three Rs. In: *Consulted to death. How Canada's workplace health and safety system fails workers*. Pages 29-43.
- Lewchuk W. 2013. The limits of voice: Are workers afraid to express their health and safety rights? *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*. Pages: 789-812.
- Varma R. and Varma D.R. 2005. The Bhopal disaster of 1984. *Bulleting of Science, Technology & Society*. 25(1): 37-45.
- Glasbeek and Tucker. 1993. Death by consensus: The Westray story. *New Solutions*. 3(4): 14-41.

## **Week 8 / March 2 Regulating Injured Bodies**

- Russell M. & Malhotra R. 2002. Capitalism and disability. *Socialist Register*. 211-228.
- Gnanayutham, R. 2017. Salvaging injured bodies: injured worker reintegration in Ontario. *Critical Disability Discourses*. Vol 8. Pages 64-97.
- Castillo C.G. 2018. What the doctors don't see: physicians as gatekeepers, injured Latino immigrants, and workers' compensation system. *Anthropology of Work Review*. 39(2): 94-104.
- Côté D. et al. 2020. Cumulative stigma among injured immigrant workers: a qualitative exploratory study in Montreal (Quebec, Canada). *Disability and Rehabilitation*. 42(8): 1153-1166.

## **Week 9 / March 9 Constructing and Applying Scientific Knowledge to Protect Workers**

- Messing, K. 1998. One-Eyed Science. Occupational Health and Women Workers. Temple University Press. Chapter 6 (Constructing Scientific Knowledge) pages 72-84.
- Premji S, Messing K, Lippel K. 2008. Would a “one-handed” scientist lack rigor? How scientists discuss the work-relatedness of musculoskeletal disorders in formal and informal communications. American Journal of Industrial Medicine. 51: 173-185.
- Brophy, J. and Keith, M. 2011. Barriers to the recognition of occupationally related cancers. Journal of Risk and Governance. 2(1):5-25.
- Ruff, K. 2017. How Canada changed from exporting asbestos to banning asbestos: The challenges that had to be overcome. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 14: 1-9.

## **Week 10 / March 16 The Politics of Risk and Disease Recognition**

- Barnettson B. 2010. The political economy of workplace injury in Canada. Chapter 8 (Conclusion). Pages 173-188.
- Mogensen V. 2003. The slow rise and sudden fall of OSHA’s Ergonomics Standard. WorkingUSA. 7(2): 54-75.
- Kramer, D., McMillan K., Gross, E., Kone Peyoyo AJ, Bradley M, Holness, DJ. 2015. From awareness to action: The community of Sarnia mobilizes to protect its workers from occupational disease. New Solutions. 25(3): 377-410.
- Natasha Luckhardt and Rob Viscardis. Town of Widows. CBC Docs Pov. 44 min. <https://gem.cbc.ca/media/cbc-docs-pov/season-3/episode-2/38e815a-0116f264f2d>

## **Week 11 / March 23 Sex and Gender**

- Messing K. 2020. If it’s a war against COVID-19, who are the soldiers on the front lines? In: *Sick of the system. Why the COVID-19 recovery must be revolutionary*. Between the Lines. Pages 19-28.
- de Celis I. et al. 2017. Women’s occupational health and safety management: An issue for corporate social responsibility. Safety Science, 91: 61-70.
- Stergiou-Kita, M. et al. 2015. Danger zone: Men, masculinity and occupational health and safety in high risk occupations. Safety Science. 80: 213-220.
- Derickson A. 2014. Sleep is for sissies: elite males as paragons of wakefulness (chapter 1) In: *Dangerously sleepy: overworked Americans and the cult of manly wakefulness*. Pages 1-26.

## **Week 12 / March 30 Racialization and Immigration**

- McClure, E. et al. 2020. Racial capitalism within public health – How occupational settings drive COVID-19 disparities. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 189(11): 1244-1253.
- Access Alliance. 2011. Research Bulletin #3. Neighbourhood, Discrimination and Health: Critical Perspectives of Racialized Residents from the Black Creek Area.
- Flynn, M.A. et al. 2015. Undocumented status as a social determinant of occupational safety and health: The workers' perspective. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*. 58(11): 1127-1137.
- Stuesse A. 2018. When they're done with you: Legal violence and structural vulnerability among injured immigrant poultry workers. *Anthropology of Work Review*. 39(2): 79-93. Toronto: Access Alliance.

## **Week 13 / April 6 The Future – Climate Change, New Technologies and Other Emerging Risks**

- International Labour Organization. 2019. Safety and Health at the Heart of the Future of Work. Building on 100 years of experience. Geneva. Pages 29-57.

## **Course Policies**

### **SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments should be submitted on Avenue.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including Saturdays and Sundays. The instructor will permit extensions for exceptional circumstances only.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## **COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT**

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

## ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

## **ZOOM LECTURES**

Guidelines for attending Zoom lectures are as follows:

- The meeting link will be communicated to you on Avenue prior to the class.
- Your mic will be muted upon entering the session.
- Use the 'raise hand' function to ask questions.
- Sessions will be recorded and posted on Avenue.

Please let me know if you have any accommodation needs for Zoom meetings.