The Future of Work
Winter 2019

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LECTURE: Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 am, Location: MDCL 1105

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Course Description & Format
Most of us, throughout most of our lives, will work. That means we will have to look for work and be involved in labour relations, the dynamic relationship between workers, employers and the state that determines how the workplace (and broader economy) is organized and who will benefit. The kind of work we are able to find will have a profound impact on our lives, our sense of self, and our place in the community. This course provides students with an introduction to work and labour relations in Canada, looking at contemporary developments in their conceptual, historical and global contexts. We want to understand what kind of work world we will encounter, how it will shape our lives, and how we might act to transform that world to make it more equitable, just and fulfilling for everyone.

We begin the course by exploring key concepts in the study of work, including the nature of the economy and workplace, the relations between workers, business, and the state, the way that class, ‘race’, gender and ability shape the organization of work, the forms of law and regulation that define workplace rights and obligations, and the kinds
of collective responses workers have created to deal with their place within these relationships. We will pay close attention to those processes that continue to transform work and labour relations on a global scale, that are making work more precarious, and that are reproducing and extending various forms of inequality amongst working people. We will end the course by looking at some of the forms of workers’ resistance in the workplace, community and political realm that have emerged to challenge the effects of these processes on their lives.

The course consists of:

- **two hour-long lectures a week**, in which the major themes and debates from the readings will be highlighted and elaborated upon. Note that lectures will discuss more than the readings, and so are not interchangeable; and

- **a weekly one-hour tutorial**, which will focus on collaborative learning activities and on the critical skills related to reading, writing, and research. Tutorial meetings allow students to engage in group dialogue, to articulate and develop their ideas on course materials, explore different perspectives, and to consult with the tutorial leader. It must be emphasized that students are expected to attend tutorials regularly and participate in discussions.

It is also important to keep in mind that knowledge in the course is cumulative – you will need to have read the material for earlier weeks to fully understand that in the later weeks. In other words, it is very important to keep up on a week-to-week basis.

**Course Learning Objectives**

This course addresses several University Graduate Degree Level Expectations. In this class, you will have a chance to:

- learn the key foundational concepts in Labour Studies related to the contemporary organization of work in Canada and within a global economy;
- develop your ability to collaborate with and learn from other students equally and respectfully;
- work on articulating and refining your own ideas, in both speaking and in writing;
- read carefully, critically and deeply;
- make links between the classroom, the readings, and the world; and
- enhance your research and writing abilities, including your ability to find relevant material and assess sources, to construct and support own argument out of a variety of sources, and to appreciate different positions on an issue.

**Required Materials and Texts**

• All other required course readings will be made available electronically on Avenue to Learn or online via the McMaster University library.

Course Evaluation Breakdown & Due Dates
- Tutorial Participation: 20%, throughout the term
- Reflection Paper on Precarious Work: 20%, February 7, 2019
- Editorial Writing Assignment: 20%, March 14, 2019
- Film Analysis: 20%, April 4, 2019
- Final Exam: 20%, During scheduled exam period in April

Participation 20%
Students are expected to come to tutorial regularly, well prepared, with both questions and comments about what they have read, and ready to participate actively in discussion of the issues and readings. Tutorial leaders will use a variety of short writing assignments in tutorial to help you focus on key concepts, identify issues that aren't clear, or allow you to reflect on what you've learned so far. Students will be evaluated according to both the frequency and quality of their interventions and on the extent to which they contribute to in-class group work. At a minimum, each student should strive to make at least one contribution to the in-class discussion each week. However, see the last page of this syllabus for detailed expectations and how to excel in your participation.

Reflection Paper on Precarious Work 20%
Are Jackson and Thomas right to say that we are “working in precarious times?” In what ways is work today precarious? In what way does your own work experience support or disprove the claim that precarious work is the “new normal”? Using the course materials and concrete examples from one’s own experience, each student will write a 1500-word reflection paper addressing the above questions. The reflection paper is due at midnight on February 7, 2019 via Avenue to Learn.

Editorial Writing Assignment 20%
What policies should governments adopt to govern, shape, or improve the world of work? Each student will choose a policy initiative currently being debated or put forward by government, and will write an 800-word editorial that makes the case for or against that initiative. A list of suggested policies and more detailed guidelines for the assignment will be provided separately. The editorial is due at midnight on March 14, 2019 via Avenue to Learn.

Film Analysis: Workers in Action 20%
Each student will write an analysis of a film (fiction or non-fiction) that explores the topic of workers acting collectively to transform their workplaces or policies that govern work. A list of suggested films and more detailed guidelines for the assignment will be provided separately. Students may choose a film that is not on the list provided they receive approval from their teaching assistant. The analysis should be 1500 words in length and is due at midnight on April 4, 2019 via Avenue to Learn.
Final Exam 20%
There will be a sit-down final exam held during the scheduled exam period (date and location TBA). The exam will be 2.5 hours in length, and will consist of concepts and short essay questions. Students will be expected to demonstrate an ability to make connections between the various topics covered in the entire course. An exam study guide will be distributed in lecture before the exam period. As a result, the expectations will be slightly higher than for a regular sit-down exam, especially in terms of the structure and organization of answers.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings
Week 1: Jan. 7 & 10
Introduction to the Course: Working in Precarious Times
• PEPSO, It's More than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-being (February 2013). Read the summary, background and key findings for each section. [Available online]

For Next Week:
• Letter of Introduction: Write a letter of introduction to your teaching assistant and professor. Tell us a bit about yourself, your programme and why you chose it, your interests, and especially your goals in this class: Why did you take this course? What are your experiences at work and with the labour movement? What is at least one thing you want to learn in this class? What would you say are your strengths as a student, and what areas would you like to improve? Are there any circumstances that might affect your performance in this class that you’d like us to be aware of? Please submit this letter to Avenue to Learn by January 17, 2019.

Week 2: Jan. 14 & 17
Working and Living in Today’s Canada: Continuity and Change
• J&T Chapters 1 & 2

Note: Tutorials begin next week

Week 3: Jan. 21 & 24
Understanding Work and Inequality I: Locating Classes: Workers, Employers, and Everyone in Between
Week 4: Jan. 28 & 31
Understanding Work and Inequality II: Gender, Paid and Unpaid Work
• J&T, Chapter 5

Week 5: Feb. 4 & 7
Understanding Work and Inequality III: Racism at Work
• J&T, Chapter 6

Note: Reflection Paper Due February 7

Week 6: Feb. 11 & 14
The Challenges of Finding, Keeping and Leaving Work
• J&T, Chapter 3 and 8

Reading Week: No Classes, February 18-22

Week 7: Feb. 25 & 28
Our Bodies at Work
• J&T, Chapters 4 and 7

Week 8: Mar. 4 & 7
Working in a Global Economy: Making Workers Flexible
• J&T, Chapter 11
University Library

Week 9: Mar. 11 & 14
Labour Rights and Employment Standards: Do They Protect Workers’ Rights and Livelihoods?

• Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, “Neoliberalism, Labour and the Canadian State,” in *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 2003)


Note: Editorial Writing Assignment Due March 14

Week 10: Mar. 18 & 21
Voices of Resistance I: Unions: Organizing, Bargaining, Political Action

• J&T, Chapter 9


Week 11: Mar. 25 & 28
Voices of Resistance II: The Alternative Labour Movement

• J&T, Chapter 10


Week 12: Apr. 1 & 4
What is the Future of Work? Review of the Course

• J&T, Chapter 12

• Review of course themes

• Exam preparation

Note: Film Analysis Due April 4
Course Policies

Submission of Assignments
All assignments must be submitted electronically via Avenue to Learn. You must use Word or Open Office to submit your assignment, and it must appear exactly as you would submit it in paper format. Electronic submission will facilitate both academic integrity (screening for plagiarism) and the tracking of late submissions (see below).

Grades
Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARK</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-90</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Assignments
Extensions for course assignments will only be granted under conditions of medical, family, or other extraordinary circumstances. All other late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day, including weekends. Late assignments will not be accepted after 7 days beyond the original deadline without appropriate documentation from the Office of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences.
Avenue to Learn
In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, 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 this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

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.

Department/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/ 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
"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:
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.

Email 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/

Location: MUSC – B107
Contact: 905-525-9140 x 28652

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
Please find the McMaster University policy on academic accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy at the following link:


Student Success Centre:
Email Address: http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/
Location: GH-110
Contact: 905-525-9140 x 24254

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:
Email Address: http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/
Location: MUSC-B10
Contact: 905-525-9140 x 27700

Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counselling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services
### Participation: Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ Exceptional</td>
<td>-original thinking</td>
<td>-has done all readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-very strong knowledge base</td>
<td>-demonstrates superior grasp of readings / concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-strong capacity for analysis / synthesis / critical evaluation, including well-thought out reasons for positions</td>
<td>-regular and very capable use readings in discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>-ability to make linkages both within and outside the course material</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-asks interesting and relevant questions - always participating, but does not dominate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Excellent</td>
<td>-strong knowledge base</td>
<td>-has done most readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-frequent participation, asks questions - shows some capacity for analysis / synthesis / critical evaluation</td>
<td>-demonstrates strong grasp of readings / concepts - frequent use of readings in discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B and B+ Good to Very Good</td>
<td>-good knowledge base, with some misunderstandings</td>
<td>-has done most readings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-analysis / critical evaluation somewhat underdeveloped, with arguments less well supported</td>
<td>-does not always read readings closely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-participation is variable</td>
<td>-familiar with concepts and issues, but at vague level which still requires some precision - occasional use of readings in discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C to C+ Fairly Competent to Competent</td>
<td>-fair knowledge base, but with many more gaps and misunderstandings</td>
<td>-has done less than half of readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-basic level of understanding, but without much analysis or critical evaluation - reasoning behind arguments absent / poorly thought out / knee-jerk</td>
<td>-tends to rely on outside knowledge / unsupported opinions rather than knowledge gained from readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-participation / questions infrequent</td>
<td>-rare use of readings in discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D to D+ Barely Passing to Passing</td>
<td>-poor knowledge base; superficial grasp of concepts or issues</td>
<td>-does readings infrequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-very little critical thinking or analysis - rarely participates or asks questions</td>
<td>-shows little familiarity with concepts - almost never refers to readings in discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E to F Failing</td>
<td>-never participates</td>
<td>-never does readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-does not even show superficial understanding of ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>